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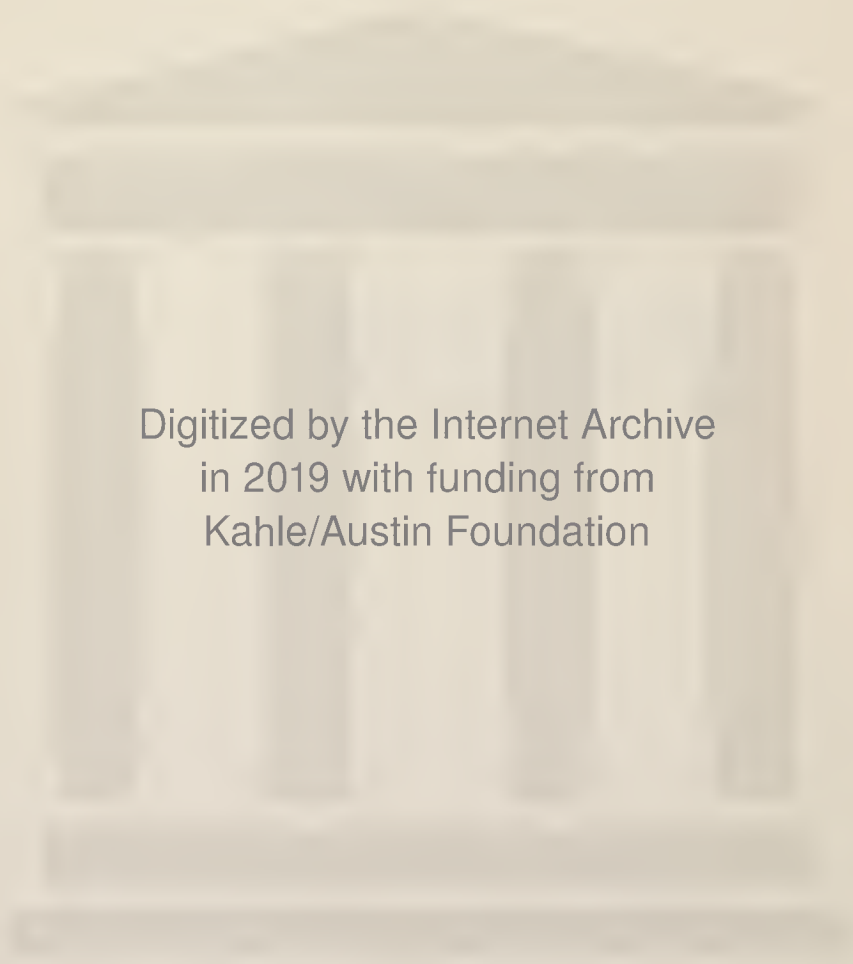








FORTY YEARS  
OF DIPLOMACY



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FORTY YEARS  
OF DIPLOMACY  
By BARON ROSEN

VOL. I



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TO  
THE HON. IRA NELSON MORRIS  
U.S. MINISTER TO SWEDEN

A DEAR FRIEND OF HAPPIER DAYS, WHO IN THE  
HOUR OF NEED PROVED A TRUE FRIEND WHEN,  
AFTER OUR FLIGHT FROM SOVIET RUSSIA, BY HIS  
KIND INTERCESSION HE ENABLED ME AND MINE  
TO REACH THE SHORES OF THIS HAPPY LAND,

THIS BOOK IS INSCRIBED BY  
HIS EVER GRATEFUL FRIEND  
THE AUTHOR





PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

*Baron Rosen died, as the result of a motor accident, before these pages were in type. They therefore lack the final revision which he would doubtless have given to them.*



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# Forty Years of Diplomacy

## CHAPTER I

The choice of a profession—Asiatic Department—A treaty with Japan—  
Appointed Vice-Consul at Yokohama.

ONE of the questions that grown people usually ask of little boys when they are called upon to make a show of interest in them is, "Now, look here, my boy; what do you propose to be when you grow up?"

When a boy of six I used to reply to this somewhat indiscreet inquiry, "I want to be a cab-driver."

I do not exactly know what prompted me to conceive such a modest view of my future career. It may have been that I had a kind of premonition that it would be my sad fate at the respectable age of seventy-two to become a proletarian.

However, I am bound to say that my views for the future underwent a considerable change within a few years after this rather reckless declaration. When I grew a little older I used to reply to the same question, briefly, "I'll be an ambassador."

In those days I did not yet realize how little real satisfaction could be derived from reaching such a high rung on the ladder of honours. However, I must suppose that it was in some measure due to these childish dreams of my boyhood that, when the time came to determine upon the choice of a profession, I made up my mind to enter the diplomatic service of my country.

While at school and in college I had acquired a decided taste for the study of history and of political economy, in which I became very much more proficient than in the other branches of learning at the School of Laws in St.

Petersburg, where I completed my education. The study of history, and especially of the history of my own country, led me to think a great deal about the question of the future of Russia.

Even then two convictions were formed in my mind ; first, that the expansion of the Russian Empire on the Continent of Europe had reached its extreme limit, beyond which any further acquisition of territory inhabited by alien races could only become a source of weakness ; and, secondly, that the true interests of Russia lay in the development of her Siberian Empire and her possessions in Central Asia.

These convictions undoubtedly influenced me when, upon entering the diplomatic service, it became necessary for me to make up my mind which of the sections of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs I would join. In those days all the strictly political business was being transacted in two sections ; one was called the Ministerial Chancellerie, which dealt with all European affairs and was therefore considered to be the ranking branch of the service. As a matter of fact, however, the young men who composed the staff of the Chancellerie had little else to do but to cultivate a beautiful handwriting and to copy dispatches, or to put into cipher or to decipher outgoing and incoming telegrams.

The other section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ever since the first organization of the Ministry, had borne the name of Asiatic Department, and was considered, from a social point of view, inferior to the Chancellerie ; but practically it had to transact all business connected with all countries of the world except Western and Central Europe. Thus, for instance, the Balkan Peninsula and Egypt, as well as the whole American continent, belonged to the domain of this Department, whose very name seemed to indicate however, that after all Asia was considered or instinctively felt to be the real and most important field for the activity of Russia's foreign policy.

I had little hesitation in making up my mind to enter the service of this particular branch of the Foreign Office, the more so as it seemed to leave me a door open for beginning my service abroad in a country which I

instinctively felt was destined to play a considerable part in the development of our political interests in Asia.

In those years, I mean the early seventies of the last century, our diplomacy was mostly active in connection with the affairs of Central Asia and the forward policy which our military commanders, such as Generals Tcherniaeff and Von Kauffmann, had been inaugurating in Turkestan. This brought us into conflict with British, or rather British-Indian interests, which led to a lively exchange of notes between the two Governments, with the copying of which I had much to do.

Although my participation in these diplomatic transactions was necessarily limited to the exercise of my penmanship, I nevertheless gained a pretty fair insight into the causes of the mutual distrust which for almost a century characterized the relations between Great Britain and Russia, to the great detriment of both.

Soon after joining the staff of the Asiatic Department I was put in charge of the Japanese Bureau. So it came about that when in the beginning of 1875 negotiations with Japan had led to the conclusion of a treaty for the exchange of the southern half of the island of Sakhalin, which was then in the possession of Japan (the northern half belonging already to Russia), for the group of the Kurile Islands, I was entrusted with the task of drafting the articles of the proposed treaty.

I might mention as a curious detail that, when I sat down to my work in connection with the drafting of the text of the treaty, it struck me that the safest way to define in the text the limits of what we were to give up in exchange for the southern half of the Island would be to do it by way of drawing simply geographical lines; that is to say, of stating in the text of the treaty that whatever islands were situated inside of the space determined by certain degrees of latitude and of longitude should be transferred to Japan. I conceived this plan because of the imperfection of the maps at our disposal and the rather vague and uncertain nomenclature of the islands of the Kurile group, which rendered enumeration by name of the islands to be ceded a matter more or less of guesswork. I felt very proud of having devised this sagacious plan, which,

however, to my disappointment, did not meet with the approval of my chiefs, and I was directed to replace my carefully drawn text of the respective article of the treaty by a nominal enumeration of the islands to be ceded.

The result was that when, after a due exchange of ratifications of the treaty, a joint commission of Russian and Japanese officers proceeded to the formal exchange of the territories that were ceded by both sides, they discovered that two islands had been omitted from the treaty, due to the fact that they had not been marked on the existing maps. Of course, this did not lead to any serious difficulty, the matter being settled then and there in accordance with the dictates of common sense. I merely mention this fact as a curiosity.

In the summer of the same year I was appointed First Secretary of our Legation in Japan, being sent out to Yokohama in the capacity of Vice-Consul, in expectation of my transfer to the Legation.

This appointment afforded me the possibility of realizing a long-cherished desire of mine to visit the United States, whose history and institutions had always been a favourite object of my studies in college.



## CHAPTER II

A visit to the United States—A Russian squadron at New York—The  
"German fleet"—Impressions of America—Old times in California—  
A determined suicide.

DURING the Civil War in the United States the overwhelming majority of public opinion in Russia sided with the Union. There was still rankling in the breasts of most people the recollection of our defeat in the Crimean War, inflicted on us by the Western Powers—by France and England—and both these countries having taken up an attitude favourable to the Southern States, public opinion in Russia naturally leaned the other way.

Moreover, there was unquestionably a kind of instinctive feeling of sympathy for the American people. Our Government in those days took up a standpoint decidedly in favour of the Union. This was, in a great measure, due to the political sagacity of Prince Gortchakoff, Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was strongly supported by the Emperor Alexander II's younger brother, the Grand Duke Constantine, who, as High Admiral, stood at the head of the Navy.

The older generation in America may remember the sensation created by the sudden appearance in the port of New York of the Russian squadron commanded by Rear-Admiral Lessofsky. The number of ships was certainly not great, and the individual vessels as fighting units were evidently not very important. Still, the appearance in American waters at that particular moment, when the fortunes of war seemed to be rather adverse to the Union cause, produced naturally a very great effect on the public mind. It was a manifestation of the decisive stand taken by the only Great Power in Europe willing to support the cause of the Union.

I shall not go any deeper into the well-known story about the Russian Admiral having sealed orders to the effect that he was to hold himself at the disposal of the

United States Government in the event of a war between the United States and Great Britain or France. I am not in a position to say whether any such sealed orders really existed or not. The importance of the event was merely political, and in any case it served to raise the spirits of the people here by bringing it home to them in a visible form that their cause had found the support of a powerful friend.

Attempts have been made in the Press, especially in later years, to belittle the importance of that friendly demonstration by explaining that the action of the Russian Government had been inspired much less by an intention to come to the assistance of the Union than by the desire to make a hostile demonstration against the Western Powers, who at the time had been threatening an intervention on the side of the Poles during the Polish Insurrection in 1863 and 1864.

It is just as likely as not that both these considerations might have influenced this decision. The result was the creation in Russia, as well as in the United States, of a strong feeling of solidarity and mutual friendship. This feeling manifested itself in the great enthusiasm with which Admiral Lessoffsky and his fleet were received, and in the unbounded enthusiasm with which Mr. Fox's mission, after the end of the Civil War, was greeted everywhere in Russia.

This enthusiasm in Russia I had witnessed myself, being then still a boy at college. We boys were naturally all full of feelings of the warmest friendship for the American people. The words "America," "American friends," "Transatlantic friends," were household words everywhere.

I was naturally greatly delighted to visit at last the country for which I had already conceived such admiration, due to the study of its history.

I embarked on one of the steamers of the Hamburg-America Steam Packet Company, a very modest little boat in comparison with the giant steamers of later years. Those were the days of swinging oil lamps in the saloon and little bits of wax candles in the lanterns in the corners between two state-rooms.

However, somehow we managed to reach the port of

New York after about fourteen days at sea. On the way I remember a little incident which in the light of recent events is perhaps rather amusing. We had just got out of the River Elbe into the open sea when I noticed on the horizon the smoke of some six or seven steamers, and by way of conversation I said to the captain:

"Hello, I see some steamers there. What might that be?"

Then he looked at me contemptuously, and said:

"Oh, that's probably the famous German fleet."

What struck me was the sneering contempt with which he uttered this remark, showing that the feeling of particularism, in spite of the recently achieved unification of Germany, must have been running pretty high in the ancient free city of Hamburg.

My first impressions on landing in New York, or rather at Hoboken, when I come to look back upon them now, seem to me rather strange, although I had conceived from the reading of many books of travel a pretty fair idea of the appearance of things in this country.

There were many aspects of things that seem to me now almost ludicrous. Thus, the hotel bus, hung high on C-springs and ornamented with wonderful pictures of views of the Hudson River, that took me to the Fifth Avenue Hotel—in those days the most magnificent hotel on the American continent.

I remember that when I went to the bank to get a sterling draft changed for dollars, I found to my astonishment that my greenbacks were at a discount of 20 per cent., and I was still more astonished to find that in Nevada and California greenbacks, although legal tender, were not current at all. Nothing but gold and silver was accepted, and the smallest change was a quarter dollar; but for the use of the retail trade the Californians had invented a non-existing coin called "bit," so that every quarter contained two bits, one a long bit of thirteen cents and the other a short bit of twelve cents, the short bit being the one you would get and the long bit being the one you would have to pay out.

From New York I went first to see the greatest wonder of the world, Niagara Falls, with the majestic grandeur of which I was profoundly impressed.



For some reason I did not stop over at Chicago but went straight on in the trans-Continental train by the Chicago and North-Western Railroad to Omaha, and from there by the "Old Reliable"—as it was then called—U.P. and the Central Pacific, direct to San Francisco. It took exactly seven days to reach San Francisco from New York, and on these trans-Continental trains one used to live very much as one would on board ship. Passengers would gradually become acquainted with each other—come together in the little smoking-rooms that used to be at the ends of the Pullman cars, and be quite sociable.

So it happened that on one occasion a Canadian joined me in the smoking-room of my car, and, introducing himself as a British subject and a Canadian, said to me :

"You know, last year there was a royal intermarriage [the Emperor Alexander II's only daughter, Marie, had been married to Queen Victoria's second son, the Duke of Edinburgh], and this fact naturally creates between us a friendly fellow-feeling."

Nowadays a similar sentiment as a source of international cordiality would seem almost antediluvian.

Finally we reached San Francisco, and one of my fellow-travellers, who was a Californian, introduced me to his club, where I heard much interesting talk of olden times in California from the lips of genuine Forty-Niners.

One story I was told related to those days when San Francisco had just emerged from the condition of a mining camp, though some fine residences had already been built by mining millionaires in the higher part of the city called Knob Hill. One night a ball was taking place on Knob Hill, to which all the swelldom of the city had been invited. At about four o'clock in the morning two young men left the ball to go home. The streets were not lighted and were not very safe, and people preferred not to walk alone at night. So these two friends started out on their way home, each of them carrying, as was the custom in those days, a pistol or "shooting iron" in his hip pocket.

The night was dark. By the dim light of the stars they noticed, after having walked some distance, on the other side of the street another group of two men who were keeping pace with them. They stopped to look at them ;



the other pair did likewise. Then our friends proceeded slowly; so did the other pair. Then they stopped again and came to the conclusion that the party that starts the fight has a better chance to come out the winner. So they opened fire. The other two promptly replied.

The result was that in the morning three corpses and one dying man were discovered lying on the ground. The dying man was just able to tell what had happened, and then it was found that all four had been guests at the same ball and in fact had been good friends.

In the light of recent tragic events, does not this occurrence serve as an illustration of the danger of so-called preparedness, and of the fallacy of the famous dictum, "If you wish for peace, prepare for war"?

Our voyage across the Pacific was as prosperous as could possibly be, although it took twenty-five days to reach Yokohama. The weather was gloriously fine, although most of the time there was a very heavy swell running.

In connection with this I remember that one morning a Chinese steerage passenger was discovered hanging by the neck from one of the cross beams. He was cut down, and revived. This Chinaman was one of a number of Chinese steerage passengers returning to their country after having made their pile in California; being all of them inveterate gamblers, this man had lost his last dollar, and evidently from despair had determined to end his life. The captain ordered him to be put in irons, but the Chinese passengers sent a deputation to the captain requesting him to restore the culprit to liberty, they undertaking to set a watch on him to prevent any further attempt at suicide.

The captain consented, and at noon we sat down to our lunch. Suddenly the engines stopped and there was a shout, "Man overboard!" We all rushed on deck, and had barely reached the rail when we saw a Chinaman in the water, swimming with the greatest energy. It turned out to be the same man, who had now repeated the attempt on his life, but finding himself in the cold water evidently thought better of it. A boat was lowered, of course, but on account of the heavy swell running it was impossible to find and save him.

## CHAPTER III

First impressions of Japan—Attitude of foreign diplomats—Sir Harry Parkes—Judge Bingham—Mr. Ito—The Great Revolution of 1868—Rebellion of Satsuma—Japanese policy.

WE steamed up the Bay of Yokohama early in the morning of July 25th. My arrival was not expected, as there had not been time enough to announce it in writing, and cable communication in those days had not yet been established with Japan. So I had to find my way as best I could in a jinriksha to the villa my future chief had rented temporarily until the construction of the Legation buildings in Tokio could be completed.

The view from the veranda of the villa overlooking the bay and the native town was really delightful. I must confess that the first month of my stay in Japan, as my recollection presents it to me now, was altogether a perfect dream of enchanted happiness.

My chief and his wife were Mr. and Mrs. de Struve, who later on, in the early eighties, represented Russia in Washington and finally at The Hague. I need hardly add that in Japan they were just as popular and just as well liked as they were there.

Our contact with the Japanese world was in a great measure facilitated through the condition of the political relations between the two countries. I had, indeed, brought with me the instrument of ratification of the Treaty of Sakhalin stipulating the exchange of the Japanese half of that island for the Russian group of the Kurile Islands. This treaty having removed the only cause of possible friction between the two countries, relations between them were most cordial.

At this time diplomatic relations were conducted on the basis of the principle of solidarity of all the foreign Powers for the purpose of being able to present to the

Japanese Government a united front in defence of their supposedly common interests. These interests naturally centred on questions of trade; in plain words, on an endeavour to hold the Japanese strictly to the conditions of the treaties by which they had signed away their right of establishing customs duties for the import trade on the basis of autonomy. This arrangement worked naturally in favour mainly of the interests of the Power whose trade, by the importance of its volume, far exceeded the trade interests of all the other Powers taken together; that is to say, Great Britain.

Now, it dawned upon some of the participants of this policy that they were lending the weight of their influence to the support of interests which in the main were not their own, to the detriment of their potential political interests in the Far East. Among these Powers were Russia and the United States—at least to judge from the attitude taken up by the United States Minister, Judge John A. Bingham, a man of very noble character, respected alike by foreigners and Japanese.

The British Minister was Sir Harry Parkes, a very able man, of high character and great business experience, having spent the greater part of his career in the consular service in the Far East. He was gifted with untiring energy, and enjoyed the absolute confidence of his countrymen in the Far East, among whom he was extremely popular. In regard to the Japanese, his policy naturally consisted in holding them as strictly as possible to the stipulations of the treaties, which the Japanese felt as a hardship from which their Government naturally desired to liberate itself as far as possible.

Now, in this respect, Judge Bingham's attitude differed considerably from that of his British colleague. Whether in consequence of his instructions, or perhaps as an effect of his personal disposition, on most contentious questions he was inclined to favour the weaker side. This did not altogether please Sir Harry Parkes, and led to a certain amount of underlying antagonism between them.

As far as my chief was concerned, he used to side mostly with Judge Bingham, for whom he entertained the highest regard.



It was the habit of the diplomats accredited to the Japanese Government to hold frequent meetings among themselves for the discussion of questions of general interest as they arose, and at these meetings the grouping of the Powers, as represented by their Ministers, would usually present this aspect : on one side the British Minister, frequently supported by his French colleague, as well as the German Minister and representatives of the smaller Powers, and on the other side the representatives of Russia and the United States.

The Japanese were well aware of this condition of affairs, which naturally contributed toward rendering the American and Russian Legations more popular with the Japanese. Thus I soon got into closer touch with some of the Japanese statesmen, such as Ito (then in the beginning of his brilliant career as Minister of Public Works), Inouyé, Matsukato, and Generals Saigo and Oyama. With the latter two, one of whom was Minister of War, General Saigo, and the other his Chief of Staff, my relations were particularly intimate on account of the taste we all three shared for the noble sport of rifle shooting.

Among the statesmen, I was perhaps brought into the closest contact with Mr. Ito, with whom I frequently had extremely interesting conversations. I remember one occasion when the question of introducing a constitutional regime in Japan was being discussed by the Japanese Cabinet, and a special mission had been sent to Europe to study the workings of the constitutions in different countries. Mr. Ito expressed the opinion that the introduction of the constitutional regime had become a necessity considering that the educated classes of the nation were very anxious to obtain a share in determining the policies of the Government, but that it would be necessary to provide certain safeguards to resist political tendencies which might turn out detrimental to the true interests of the nation. With this end in view he considered that an article in the constitution, somewhat on the lines of a similar stipulation in the constitution of Prussia, would meet the case ; that is to say, an article empowering the Ministers, in case of Parliament having refused to vote supplies, to carry on the government on the basis of the budget law of the preceding year.

I will not attempt to relate the history of the great upheaval that resulted in 1868 in the restoration of the power of the Mikado, which had been in abeyance during all the centuries of the existence of the Shogunate or government of the Tycoon. I will only mention that Ito and Inouyé were the first Japanese to go to England with the intention of acquainting themselves by close observation with Western civilization and institutions.

They were both Samurai of the clan of Choshu. Much impressed with what they had seen in Europe, they returned firmly decided to break through the age-long seclusion of Japan from contact with the rest of the world. They found vigorous support from their chieftain, the Prince of Choshu, and likewise from the Prince of Satsuma, the two most powerful chieftains in feudal Japan.

It must not be forgotten that the restoration of the Mikado's power entailed not only the overthrow of the Shogunate, but the abolition of feudalism, which had been for centuries the basic foundation of the social fabric of the State; in other words, a complete revolutionary upheaval. That this great revolution was accomplished almost without any bloodshed speaks volumes for the wisdom and moderation of the statesmen who had undertaken it.

They would, however, not have been able to accomplish their task had they not enjoyed the never-wavering confidence and support of the young Mikado, Mutsu Hito, whose power they had restored, and whose name will go down in history as that of one of the greatest sovereigns the world has ever known.

Even after the introduction of a constitutional government the original group of, as they were called, "elder statesmen" or *genro*, retained the greatest influence, as the ultimate decision in all momentous affairs of State rested with them. A leading part was played by Ito, created at first Count, then Marquis, and finally Prince. He unquestionably ranks with the greatest constructive statesmen of history.

Both in domestic and foreign policy the Mikado's Government was confronted with serious difficulties. The liquidation of the feudal regime entailed the necessity of indemnifying not only the numerous, and some of them

extremely powerful, feudatory princes, or Daimios, but also the extremely numerous class of their dependents, the Samurai. This indemnification took the form of a grant of pensions, represented by interest-bearing Government bonds. Whilst some of the great Daimios were in this way provided with very large incomes, the great mass of their followers, who, under the feudal regime, were entirely supported by their lords, could not naturally all be provided with sufficiently ample means of existence.

So a number of the lesser Samurai, who found themselves unexpectedly in possession of some Government bonds, the interest whereof was meant to represent the grant of a pension, began to dispose of their bonds in the open market, and frequently succeeded in running through the small sums realized in this way. Many of them took service as soldiers or officers in the Army or in the newly created police force, others went into business, trades and professions hitherto considered derogatory to the dignity of the Samurai.

All this naturally created a certain amount of discontent, which in the end may have been one of the causes leading to the rebellion which broke out in the former principality of Satsuma in the autumn of 1877, and which was more or less a revolt against the newly established order of things.

One of the noticeable features of this rebellion was that it broke out in the province which had been the feudatory State of the Prince of Satsuma, who, together with the Prince of Choshu, had been one of the most powerful supporters of the restoration; and furthermore, that the leader of the rebellion was the famous Marshal Saigo, whose younger brother was at the time in command of the loyal Imperial Army in his capacity of Minister of War.

The Government immediately took energetic steps to repress the revolution, which was in a measure facilitated for them through the circumstance that the active operations of the rebels were confined to the Island of Krusiu, where the Province of Satsuma is situated. It did not take the Government troops long to get the better of the revolutionists, although they were commanded by the famous Marshal Saigo, who in the first years of the



restoration had won great distinction in an expedition on the Island of Formosa. When he realized that his cause was lost he committed suicide.

Having promptly suppressed the armed rebellion, the Government exercised great moderation in dealing with the situation, and the Prince of Satsuma, who, of course, must have been cognizant of the plans of Marshal Saigo, one of his foremost dependents, was not molested in any way.

The young Japanese Army recently organized on the European model by a French military mission showed its newly acquired efficiency in the prompt and thorough victory over the rebel forces. Although in later years, for some unexplained reason, the Japanese Government chose to dispense with the services of the French military mission, and to confide the further training of its troops to German instructors, the credit of having laid the solid foundation for the organization and most efficient training of the Japanese troops belongs unquestionably to France, to whom, therefore, should also be credited part, at least, of the success achieved by Japan in China and in Manchuria.

As regards foreign policy, the Japanese Government of the restoration had to contend from the beginning against very great difficulties arising primarily from their utter inexperience in matters of international diplomatic intercourse, and then from the fact that all the foreign Powers who had concluded treaties with Japan were, so to speak, leagued in their supposed common interest against Japan, for the better maintenance of their rights and commercial advantages stipulated in the treaty.

In dealing with this situation Japanese statesmen soon began to show considerable skill. They were not long in discovering that beneath the apparent solidarity of the Treaty Powers there were undercurrents due to many divergent political, as well as commercial, interests. By playing on these divergencies many an important point might be gained.

One of the conditions that has favoured the surprising rise and phenomenal growth as a World Power of the Japanese Empire is due to the fact that Japan is the only great country in the world whose population is almost absolutely homogeneous. Moreover, the Japanese, although they have

but recently adopted Western civilization, had long been in possession of a very high and refined culture which rendered the assimilation of all the conquests of Western civilization comparatively easy.

Furthermore, the astonishing success achieved by Japan in the domain of domestic, as well as of foreign policy, is largely due to the fact—and now I am about to express an opinion the unpopularity of which I am well aware—that the Japanese Government from its beginning has been and is to this hour practically an oligarchy; that is to say, the rule of a limited group of very capable statesmen, who have been able to fill the vacancies that have necessarily occurred from time to time in their number, by a system of what may be called co-optation, quite independent of any consideration of party.



## CHAPTER IV

Outbreak of Russo-Turkish War—Its effect on the situation in Japan—  
Presence in Japanese waters of Russian and British squadrons—  
Threatened rupture between Great Britain and Russia—The Berlin  
Congress—The Japanese Navy—Return to Russia on leave of absence

IN the beginning of the seventies rumblings of an impending storm began to be heard in Herzegovina, a province inhabited by a branch of the Serbian race. Local risings of the people against the Turkish authorities provoked repressive measures, and soon the whole country was in a state of open revolt. The people of the neighbouring principality of Serbia, then a vassal State of the Ottoman Empire, naturally could not remain indifferent to the sufferings of their kinsfolk in Herzegovina. At the same time symptoms of revolutionary unrest began to appear in Bulgaria, and were put down by the Turks in such a way as to provoke all over the world an indignant outcry against the Turkish Government. That was the time of Mr. Gladstone's famous campaign against Bulgarian atrocities.

These events produced a profound impression in Russia, both the Serbians and Bulgarians being Slavs, and therefore racially related to the Russian people, and, moreover, partly co-religionists, as belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church. Whilst the educated classes probably attached greater importance to the racial affinity with the victims of Turkish misrule, the popular mind was much more impressed by the cruel sufferings inflicted by the infidel Turk on their brothers in the Christian Faith. Popular excitement, embracing all classes of society and carefully fostered by the Press and the organization known as the "Slav Benevolent Society," was constantly growing and beginning to exercise a powerful influence over the Government.

Yielding to the pressure of public opinion, the Govern-

ment at first tolerated and then almost openly favoured the organization of parties of volunteers who went to Serbia to place their services at the disposal of the Serbian Government. Readers of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* will remember that the hero, Vronsky, the lover of the unfortunate Anna, also went as a volunteer to fight for the Slav cause and the Orthodox Faith.

Meanwhile, European diplomacy had been busy trying to prevent a general conflagration in the Balkan Peninsula by bringing pressure to compel Turkey to grant her subject races certain liberal reforms. To bring about the needed unanimity among the Great Powers, whose representatives met in conference in Constantinople, was not an easy matter. The leading parts at the conference table were played by the Russian Ambassador, General Ignatieff, and Lord Salisbury, the special envoy of Great Britain. It was largely due to the enlightened spirit of conciliation displayed by that great statesman that the conference resulted in the elaboration of a scheme of reforms to be proposed for adoption to the Turkish Government. However well meant and cleverly devised, this scheme failed of acceptance by the Turkish Government, perhaps on account of some doubts in their mind in regard to the sincerity of the Great Powers in their professions of unanimity. Things were left to drift towards war, since the Russian Government had taken a stand from which regard for the demand of public opinion would not allow them to recede. In the meantime the Government, so as to be ready for a campaign in the Balkan Peninsula, had been negotiating with the Austro-Hungarian Government with a view to securing a free hand in the event of war with Turkey and a guarantee of safety for the right flank of the Russian Army from any attack, or threat of attack, on behalf of Austria-Hungary. These negotiations resulted in an agreement, by which this non-interference by Austria-Hungary had to be paid for by Russia's consent to the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austro-Hungarian forces for the purpose of re-establishing and maintaining law and order in these provinces, who were to remain nominally under the suzerainty of the Sultan. Further on in the course of my narrative I shall have occasion to revert to this arrange-

ment, which eventually proved to be one of the contributory causes of the outbreak of the World War.

In the spring of 1877 Russia declared war against Turkey; the Russian armies crossed the Danube and invaded Bulgaria. Their victorious advance was, however, checked by the unexpected stubborn defence by the Turks of the hastily strengthened position of Plevna, occupied by Osman Pasha's army. While the siege of this fortified position, which blocked the way to the south to the invading army, was still proceeding, and the final issue of the campaign seemed to be uncertain, my chief went home on a prolonged leave of absence and I was left, at a comparatively young age, in full charge of the Legation for the next two years.

In those days Japanese ports, such as Nagasaki and Yokohama, were favourite stations for the naval forces of the leading maritime Powers in Far Eastern waters. We also had a small squadron stationed in Yokohama roadstead under the command of a rear-admiral and composed of four light cruisers, rather slow vessels even for those times, which did not amount to much as a fighting force. Their presence, however, seemed to give some concern to the British naval authorities, so that after a while a squadron of about twelve vessels was collected in the Bay of Yokohama. The English squadron was commanded by Vice-Admiral Welles (I am not sure whether I spell his name correctly), a typical and most charming old salt, who carried his flag on the ironclad *Audacious*. His second in command, if I am not mistaken, was Captain Buller, of the *Modeste*, a brother of General Sir Redvers Buller, of South African fame, with whom I was on particularly friendly terms. The prolonged stay in Yokohama Bay of such a comparatively large British naval force, comprising nearly all of the naval vessels in the Far East, did not at first impress me as anything out of the ordinary, knowing as I did that the Japanese station was always a favourite one with sailors of all nations. It was not till events in Europe had begun to take a more decisive turn with the passage of the Balkans by our troops and their approach to Constantinople, that the reason for the continued presence in Japanese waters of so comparatively large a

British naval force became apparent. The traditional distrust of Russia's policy in the Near East had begun to work on the public mind in England, and when the conclusion between Russia and Turkey of the Treaty of San Stefano seemed to disclose Russia's far-going plans of political predominance in the Balkan Peninsula, the British Government's policy began to assume a more and more anti-Russian attitude and the relations between Russia and Great Britain gradually reached a stage when an open rupture seemed to be the most likely outcome. The threatening aspect of affairs in Europe naturally was in a certain measure reflected likewise in the situation in the Far East. Just at the time of the greatest tension in the relations between the two countries, cable communication with Europe by the Indian line was interrupted, and the British could communicate with their Government only by the Danish cable to Vladivostok and the Russian land lines. Telegraphic news of a final rupture and declaration of war would therefore be sure to reach first of all the Russian Legation in Tokio and would enable the Russian cruiser squadron to go to sea at once and begin operations in the Pacific Ocean. Although as a fighting force this small squadron was quite insignificant, it might have inflicted considerable damage on British shipping until captured or sunk. It was therefore important to watch the Russian vessels in Japanese waters to prevent the possibility of their unobserved escape to the open ocean. This, then, was the explanation of the presence of such a large British squadron in the Bay of Yokohama. The tension in the political relations between our countries did not, however, affect adversely the friendliness of my personal relations with the British naval authorities. On the contrary, being the representative of much the weaker side from a naval point of view, I was in every way being treated by them with redoubled and most chivalrous courtesy.

Happily the threatened rupture never took place. A preliminary understanding having been reached by Lord Salisbury and the Russian Ambassador in London, Count Schouvaloff, a settlement of the peace question by the Berlin Congress became possible. This settlement, which entailed a revision of the Treaty of San Stefano, was neces-



sarily in the nature of a compromise and left a sting of bitterness in the hearts of the adherents and promoters of the policy that had led to the war with Turkey, from the victorious termination of which they had expected greater results. It must be owned, however, that we engaged in this war without a very clear conception of the results which we had set out to achieve by force of arms. Having begun the war without a definite programme, when victory was ours, we overstepped the bounds of what we could safely attempt to secure with due regard for the interests of Austria-Hungary, who held the whip-hand over us on the right flank of our armies, and of our ever-jealous rival, Great Britain, whose fleet had taken up a rather threatening position in Besika Bay. The dreams entertained by our militant slavophiles and imperialists of the establishment of a permanent political domination over the Balkan Peninsula failed indeed of realization. Still, the acquisition of Kars and Batoum in Asia Minor and the restitution to Russia of that part of Bessarabia which had been lost after the Crimean War and the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris on one hand, and on the other, the recognition of the complete independence of Roumania, Serbia and Montenegro, and the creation of the vassal principality of Bulgaria, with the autonomous province of Eastern Rumelia, would appear sufficiently satisfactory as the results of even a victorious war. Nevertheless, public opinion in Russia considered the outcome of the Berlin Congress as a grievous disappointment, for which the responsibility was attributed partly to the incapacity of our diplomacy and partly to the failure of Prince Bismarck to support our contentions with all his influence as President of the Congress. The Socialist parties did not fail to seize the opportunity created by the generally prevailing disappointment and discontent with the results of the war for a renewal of their revolutionary activity, which took the form of several attempts on the life of the Emperor. This, however, is a subject to which I shall revert in the next chapter of my narrative.

The Japanese Government, during all this time, had been closely watching the development of events in Europe, probably drawing their own conclusions from what they were able to observe in regard to the combinations of

European Powers which might possibly affect their interests in the Far East. In the meanwhile they observed the strictest neutrality, with perhaps a slight leaning in favour of our side as the one from which they could best hope to obtain some support in the future, when the question of the revision of the commercial treaties would come up for consideration.

Besides the organization of a regular army, the Japanese Government had also taken steps for the gradual acquisition of a navy. The organization of this branch of the service had been entrusted to an English naval officer, Captain James, who was placed at the head of a naval school where Japanese aspirants for the naval service were receiving professional training. At the same time, the Government had ordered the building, in England, of some vessels destined to serve as a nucleus for the future Japanese fleet. The first three of these vessels were the ironclad *Fuso-Kan* and the protected cruisers *Hiyei-Kan* and *Kongo-Kan*. They arrived in Japan, if I remember well, in the summer of 1878. In the English colony in Yokohama a rumour had been afloat to the effect that I had been secretly negotiating with the Japanese Government for the purchase of these vessels in view of the expected outbreak of war between Russia and Great Britain. I need hardly say that nothing of the kind had ever been contemplated by either of the two Governments. Upon the arrival of these vessels at Yokohama, the Japanese Government determined to give the Emperor an opportunity of seeing his newly acquired naval forces, and for this purpose organized a naval review in which they requested the commanders of the numerous foreign men-of-war at anchor in the roadstead to take part. On the appointed day the Emperor, with the Imperial Princes, boarded the *Fuso-Kan* as the flagship of the little Japanese squadron. The diplomatic corps, that is to say the chiefs of missions, of which I had the honour to be one, were invited to join His Majesty on board the flagship. After the reception by the Emperor of the foreign admirals and commanders, the *Fuso-Kan* weighed anchor and stood out to sea, followed by the *Hiyei-Kan* and the *Kongo-Kan* for a little excursion down the bay so as to show off the manœuvring capabilities of

the new squadron. It so happened that when I was passing the deckhouse containing the chart-room, I noticed a gentleman in a dress coat and a white necktie trying to hide himself behind the door, but who, on finding himself discovered, gave me a friendly smile of recognition. He turned out to be Captain James, who had been requested by the Japanese Admiral to hold himself in reserve in readiness for any emergency when his professional assistance might be desired.

This was the nucleus of the Japanese fleet which covered itself with glory in the war with China barely sixteen years later, and lastly in the war with Russia.

In November 1879, my chief, Mr. de Struve, returned to his post with his charming wife and three little girls, the two eldest of which were my godchildren, the youngest one having cheated me out of my favourite occupation of standing godfather to all Russian children born in Japan by choosing to come into this world in St. Petersburg. A couple of weeks later I left for home on leave of absence by way of the United States, which I was very anxious to revisit, and this time for a more prolonged stay. On reaching Washington I put up as guest of a particular friend of mine, who was First Secretary of our Legation there, in a boarding-house inhabited by most of the young secretaries and attachés of the foreign Legations. It was the time when the Bell Telephone had just emerged from the condition of a toy to the status of an indispensable appurtenance of every well-regulated household. Profiting by the presence in the hall of that wonderful instrument, it used to be our favourite amusement in the morning to ring up Central, and when a sweet female voice would reply, "Well?" we would say, in a mysterious tone of voice, "Carrie, is that you?" Whereupon "Carrie" would switch us off with a bang.

## CHAPTER V

Situation in Russia—An explosion at the Palace—Count Loris-Melikoff—Alexander II and reform—Conflict with China and threatened rupture—Preparations for war—Despatch of a squadron to Far Eastern waters—Temporary mission to San Francisco as a possible basis of supply for the fleet—Newport—A “big bonanza.”

AFTER having spent, most agreeably, about a month in Washington; having been initiated at the old Metropolitan Club in the mysteries of the seductive but slightly uncertain game of poker; and lastly, at a Christmas Eve party at Sir Edward and Lady Thornton's, having witnessed a performance of the Spanish dance known as “cachucha” by my old lamented friend and colleague, Victor Drummond, then First Secretary of the British Legation, as well as a remarkable stunt executed by the German Minister, the very learned Dr. von Schloetzer, which consisted of his turning his white waistcoat inside out without taking off his dress coat, I reluctantly bade good-bye to all my newly made friends in America and embarked once more on the waves of my beloved Atlantic Ocean, which, I am happy to say, I have crossed thirty-seven times, the last crossing that brought me here having rendered me happier than all previous ones.

I arrived in St. Petersburg in the very height of the season, and was naturally drawn into a vortex of gaieties. Soon, however, an event of ominous import was to turn my thoughts away from the gaieties of the season and direct them toward the most serious condition of affairs created by the Government's domestic policy.

It so happened that some evening, either in January or in February 1880, in the drawing-room of a lady, whose house used to be the habitual resort of some of the leading members of our Government and of the knowing ones among the foreign ambassadors, such as Lord Dufferin and the



Chevalier Nigra, I was engaged in a game of whist with the hostess, the Italian Ambassador, and one of our Ministers of State, when we were startled by a distant report as of a discharge of a piece of heavy ordnance. A servant was sent immediately to find out what had happened, and he soon returned with the news that an explosion had taken place in the palace, and that a number of soldiers on guard had been killed, but that the members of the Imperial family were all safe. Later in the evening our party was joined by Count Loris-Melikoff, a General of Armenian origin, who had commanded our victorious troops in the late campaign in Asia Minor, and Count Adlerberg, the Minister of the Imperial household and an intimate friend and great favourite of the Emperor, who both had just come from the palace. They related the story as follows : The Imperial family were expecting the arrival, in time for the seven o'clock dinner, of the Empress's brother, Prince Alexander of Hesse, but the Prince's special train having been delayed, the dinner-hour had been changed from seven to eight o'clock. This circumstance was evidently unknown to the conspirators, who had prepared a formidable mine in the cellar directly underneath the guard-room, where some twenty or thirty soldiers of the Palace Guard, free from sentry duty, were resting. This room, in its turn, was situated directly under the Imperial family's private dining-room. It had evidently been the intention of the conspirators to explode the mine at the time when the Imperial family would be at dinner in the dining-room. Thanks to the fortunate circumstance of the Prince's delayed arrival, no one was present in the dining-room at the time when the explosion took place, and the only damage done was suffered by the parquet floor and the dinner table, But in the guard-room underneath the dining-room, the greater number of the soldiers who happened to be present were killed outright and the rest severely wounded. The consternation among the statesmen present in my friend's drawing-room was very great, and led to an exchange of views between them as to what had best be done in order to save, or at least improve, the situation. The prevailing view seemed to be that the great defect of the Government's domestic policy consisted in the absence of the necessary

unity of action between the different branches of the administration, and that therefore it was primarily necessary to devise some means of securing such unity of purpose and action. They talked very freely and unreservedly, and as an accidental listener to their conversation I was struck by the shallowness of the view they seemed to take of the deeper causes of the discontent and unrest. Whether the plan they had vaguely outlined underwent any further discussion in the council called by the Emperor, and what considerations influenced His Majesty's ultimate decision, I do not know. As a matter of fact, two or three days later, Count Loris-Melikoff was, by Imperial decree, appointed Supreme Chief of the Executive, with the subordination to him of all Ministers and heads of departments of the Government. By this delegation to him of part of the Emperor's sovereign power, a kind of dictatorship was established, which Count Loris-Melikoff took pains to explain in his public utterances was to be "a dictatorship of the heart." Whether this distinguished General possessed all the necessary qualifications which go to the making of a great statesman, capable of dealing with a momentous crisis in a nation's history, is a question which I shall not undertake to decide. But he was unquestionably a most loyal patriot, a thoroughly well-meaning man, of fairly liberal views, and he evidently realized fully that the reactionary policy adopted by the Emperor was a most illogical sequel to the great reforms—the liberation of the serfs, the establishment of the institutions of local, provincial, and municipal self-government, and the reform of the judiciary—could not possibly be pursued any further without endangering the safety of the dynasty and of the State. He did not cling to his functions of dictator any longer than he thought was absolutely necessary in order to restore confidence in the unshaken power of the Government. Before the year was out he obtained the Emperor's consent to his renunciation of these functions, and his appointment simply as Minister of the Interior. At the same time he undertook, with the strong support of some of the most liberal statesmen of those days, to devise a plan for the reform of the Council of the Empire—that is to say, the legislative branch of the Government—by adding a certain number of elected representatives of

the nobility, of the provincial institutions of local self-government, and of the municipalities of the larger towns, as well as of commerce and industry and institutions of learning. The plan worked out by Count Loris-Melikoff and his associates was destined never to see the light of day, and I am therefore unable to speak of its details with any degree of certainty. I only know, as this was a matter of public notoriety, that the fundamental idea of the projected reform contemplated the converting of the purely bureaucratic council of the empire into a more or less representative consultative assembly, in short, the creation of a stepping-stone to further developments in the direction of the gradual introduction of a moderate constitutional regime. As I look back now on the history of my time and of my own country, from the point of view of a long, varied and matured experience in studying political conditions in a number of widely different countries, I feel convinced that, had this plan been adopted and carried through with unwavering firmness, the destiny of the Russian people would have been a different one. But it was not to be. The inscrutable design of Providence had decreed the failure of this attempt at directing the course of the nation's history into a safer channel.

It is a well-established fact that the Emperor, after some hesitation, had fully approved the plan of reform submitted to him by his Minister, had caused its main features to be embodied in a manifesto to his people, and had signed that manifesto on March 1, 1881, on the very morning and just before he left the palace for his last drive, from which he was to be brought back a bleeding mass of quivering, inanimate flesh. And when the last flickering flame of life had left the martyred body of him who had been the liberator of tens of millions of his people, with it was extinguished, perchance for ever, the hope of a peaceful development of the destinies of the Russian nation. And this awful, unspeakable crime against the people of Russia was committed in the sacred name of Liberty by one of her unfortunate deluded sons, one of those sinister maniacs in whose unbalanced mind dwells the insane notion that they are called upon to secure the felicity of their people, or even of mankind, by the murder of some human being



whom they conceive to be an obstacle to the realization of their dreams.

It was the everlasting deadly feud between the two extreme wings of the "Intelligentsia," the bureaucracy on one side and the Revolutionary Socialistic Party on the other, the beginning of which must be traced back to the second half of the reign of Alexander II, that presumably caused the Emperor to put a brake on the reforming activity of the beginning of his reign, with the fatal result which he paid with his life and Russia with the arrest of her peaceful progress and development. His having yielded against his better judgment to the pressure of the moderate part of the "Intelligentsia," adepts of the "great Slav idea," and having engaged in the war for the liberation of Bulgaria, perhaps in the hope of rallying the elements of discontent to the support of his Government as having adopted a supposedly truly national policy, did not only not have the hoped-for effect, but the disillusion bred by the final result of the war created an atmosphere which the revolutionary parties thought to be favourable to the realization of their nefarious plans, and it therefore merely hastened the approach of the crisis to which he was to fall a victim.

Having dwelt so long on the tragic end of the Emperor Alexander's II's reign, I have forestalled the course of events, and I must now take up again the thread of my narrative.

Long before my return to St. Petersburg, the relations between Russia and China had become somewhat strained on account of the demand for the restitution to China of the province of Kulja having been pressed by the Chinese Government. This demand arose from the following circumstance: In 1864 an insurrection had broken out in that region and kept it in a condition of chronic disorder, with which the Chinese Government did not seem able to cope successfully. These continuous disorders affecting injuriously the neighbouring part of Russian Turkestan, our Government had caused Kulja to be occupied by Russian troops in the year 1871, at the same time promising to return the occupied territory to China as soon as order had been re-established. Since then almost ten years had elapsed, and the Chinese Government considered that the

time had come for demanding the evacuation of the occupied territory by the Russian troops and its restitution to China. Although the Chinese claim was not disputed by our Government in principle, some difficulty had arisen in regard to the conditions under which the restitution of the occupied territory should take place. What these conditions were I do not remember. This, however, is of no importance, as the disputed question was, in the following year, settled peaceably to the satisfaction of both parties concerned. But at the time of which I am writing now, that is to say in the spring of 1880, the strain on the relations between the two Governments had nearly reached the breaking point, and it was deemed necessary to make all due preparations for a possible armed conflict with China. With this end in view it was, among other things, decided to despatch to the Far East a fresh squadron to reinforce the few war vessels habitually stationed in those waters. I must confess that the wisdom of this particular way of preparing for a war with a neighbouring Power with which we had a common frontier of about three thousand miles on land, appeared to me rather questionable from a strategic point of view. Nor could I ever find out what precise object the despatch of the squadron to the Far East was to serve, an attack on the open ports of China being evidently quite out of the question, as this would necessarily have embroiled us with all the other so-called Treaty Powers. In the spring of 1880, I was ordered to take temporary charge of the Consulate-General at San Francisco, as that port had been chosen as a possible base of supply for the fleet which was to operate at a distance from there of about five thousand miles, and when I reported to my chief for duty and instructions I was referred by him to the Acting Minister of Marine. The latter was likewise unable to give me any instructions whatever, and told me, with his best wishes for a prosperous journey, to just proceed to San Francisco and there await further developments.

These proceedings put me in mind of a story related of the celebrated Swedish Chancellor, Oxenstierna, who, when sending off his son on what used in those days to be called the "grand tour," told him as a parting advice: "Now, my son, you are going to visit all the Courts of Europe

and you will convince yourself by personal observation with how little wisdom the world is governed."

I must confess also that I did not take a very serious view of the mission that was entrusted to me, but I was very glad indeed of the chance that offered to spend probably a number of months in the United States. I started at once on my journey, and reached New York in the beginning of June. On arrival I found that the Consul-General in New York, who had just been promoted to that post from San Francisco, wished to return to that city for a couple of months to settle his private affairs, and asked me to fill his place during his absence. This proposition struck me as being exceedingly acceptable, as it gave me a chance of quite a prolonged stay in a city which I had already then learned to consider one of the best places this side of the grave. So I at once consented, provided the Government would sanction such an arrangement.

In these days, when the flow of immigration from Russia had not yet set in, the post of Consul-General in New York was more or less of a sinecure, most of whatever little business there was to do being usually transacted by the Vice-Consul, Mr. Peterson, an old New Yorker of Danish extraction, and a greatly respected, very popular and charming gentleman, and moreover a most efficient official. I felt, therefore, little compunction about making over the business of the office entirely to him when the temperature in New York became too uncomfortably warm for me, and to take my flight to the seaside. On my way to Newport I had the good luck to find, on the boat, an acquaintance whom I had met in Washington in the preceding winter. So I mostly divided my time between swimming in the ocean and indulging in friendly rubbers of whist at the club called the Newport Reading Room, with August Belmont, James V. Parker, Christopher Columbus Baldwin, General Lawrence, and others—all, alas! since dead. Newport in those days was, of course, the most fashionable resort in America, and there were already some very fine houses, modestly called cottages, but it had not yet become the city of seaside palaces it is to-day. From there I used to make, every now and then, excursions to the so-called North Shore, that is to say, the Massachusetts coast between the towns



of Salem, of witch-burning fame, and Gloucester, of codfish renown, a stretch of country like a huge park, covered with woods coming down to the water's edge and dotted with beautiful cottages; in short the loveliest seaside resort I know.

When my friend, the Consul-General, returned to New York to resume his duties, I had to leave for San Francisco, where I was to await further orders.

I did not leave New York without a pang of regret; but when I found myself in San Francisco, comfortably established in the famous Palace Hotel, breathing that wonderfully bracing and exhilarating air of the Pacific coast, I soon felt happy. There, too, I met some kind friends who made me see all the sights, including Chinatown, which could be visited only in company with a detective.

This was a time of great excitement in the market of mining securities. One of the mines in Nevada called the Consolidated Virginia, or abbreviated, Con Virginia, had suddenly turned out to be a "big bonanza," and the shares, which had been quoted heretofore in cents, suddenly jumped up into dollars, tens of dollars, and finally hundreds of dollars, if not thousands. The result was that the whole population of San Francisco was gambling in mining stocks.

Never having had any gambling propensities, I did not take a hand in this game that was being played by everybody, down to the waiters and the bootblacks. Still, one evening, the tempter approached me. This is how it happened: I had returned to the hotel from an evening party, and had gone into the bar-room for a glass of beer, when I noticed a great big, rather ordinary-looking man in conversation with a newspaper man that I happened to know. After a while this newspaper man came to me and said: "You saw me just now talking to that fellow there? You know, he is a very successful miner, and is now the chief owner of a certain mine. He asked me who you were, and when I told him that you were the Russian Acting Consul-General, 'Oh,' he said, 'that's fine; I like that fellow; I like all Russians. I once knew a captain in the Russian Navy. Just ask him whether he will have a drink with me.'" My newspaper friend continued: "That miner just now is a little under the weather, not to say intoxicated,

but he is quite a character, and it might amuse you to have a little talk with him." I did not like to disappoint my friend, and so I consented to be introduced to the miner. After exchanging a few words with him, I said good-night and went upstairs to my room. I had scarcely begun undressing when there was a knock at the door, and in walked my newspaper friend. "Excuse my disturbing you," said he, "but I have an important message to deliver to you. After you left the miner—let us call him Jack Doe—said that he had taken a fancy to you and wanted to do you a good turn. He told me to come upstairs at once and to tell you to buy to-morrow morning as many shares of the stock of the Henrietta mine as you can manage to buy, and to freeze on to them for dear life until they sell for fourteen dollars a share (they were that day quoted at ninety cents), and then sell out immediately." My friend advised me strongly to follow Jack Doe's advice. "Because," said he, "Jack, although a professional miner, is as true as gold, and he evidently intends to rig up what they call a 'boom' in the stock of the Henrietta mine, of which he is the chief owner, and, having taken a fancy to you, wants to let you in on the 'ground floor.' As for me, I'm going to invest every cent I own in this little speculation."

Now, it is said that fortune smiles upon every man once in his lifetime. The wise man takes it, or her, by the forelock, the other fellow doesn't. By failing to take advantage of Jack Doe's so kindly proffered advice I proved that I was one of the "other" ones, and would, in all probability, not end my life as the happy owner of a private car and a steam yacht.



## CHAPTER VI

Return to Japan—Assassination of the Emperor Alexander II—The last act of his reign—Emperor Alexander III—His hesitation at first—Definite choice of a policy—Negotiations at Tokio on the revision of existing treaties—Sir Harry Parkes.

As I had expected from the first, my mission to San Francisco turned out to have been more or less of a fool's errand. Some satisfactory agreement had been reached with China, and the preparations for a naval war with that continental Power were abandoned. In the meantime my chief, Mr. de Struve, had become impatient at the long delay of my return to Japan, and had succeeded in obtaining, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, my release from my useless mission to San Francisco. Towards the end of December 1880 I received orders to resume my diplomatic duties as Secretary of Legation at Tokio. I took the first steamer that was going to sail for Japan, which happened to be an English cargo boat, the *Belgic*, belonging to the Occidental and Oriental Steamship Company. She was a comparatively small boat, with very limited passenger accommodation ; in fact, there were only eight state-rooms, and we happened to be exactly the same number of passengers. So every one of us had a state-room for himself.

From the moment we steamed out of the Golden Gate we encountered a north-westerly gale that kept us company all the way across the Pacific until we reached Yokohama twenty-eight days later.

I was very happy indeed to find myself again with my dear old friends in my old familiar surroundings. It was like a real homecoming, and I soon settled down to the old quiet and pleasant life, quite unconscious of the approach of the catastrophe that was already so near.

On the morning of March 2, 1881, I had to go to Yokohama on some business, and on driving down the street

bordering on the seashore I accidentally looked at the bay and suddenly noticed that the flags on the Russian Admiral's flagship were being slowly hauled down to half-mast, and the yards were being crossed, which movements were followed by all the naval vessels of various nations anchored in the roadstead. The thought at once flashed through my mind: the Emperor is dead! I hurried home and found that a cable had been received at the Legation in the morning, shortly after I had started for Yokohama, announcing the assassination of Alexander II, which had taken place the day before. Our consternation was extreme. We felt it as an irreparable national misfortune and a sinister omen for the future of our country. This feeling of consternation seemed to be shared by foreigners of all nationalities as well, and we were being overwhelmed with assurances of sympathy and condolence.

At the first the Government, as well as the people, were as if paralysed with horror by the awful character of the crime and the fear of its incalculable consequences. All sorts of hasty, ill-considered and panicky measures were taken by the Government, which served no useful purpose, and only disclosed the extent to which the authorities had lost their heads. Fortunately, the new Sovereign, Alexander III, was a man of sturdy character, strong unshakable will, and absolutely straightforward honesty of purpose. His attitude was one of sorrowful but imposing dignity, and at the same time of firm and calm resolution, which contributed much toward allaying public excitement and apprehension. Rumours of the existence of an important manifesto, signed by the late Emperor before his tragic end, soon spread among the people, but nothing was known about its contents, and public curiosity was much exercised over the question whether it would be confirmed and published by the new Sovereign. As I was then in Japan, I did not learn till much later of all the developments that had been taking place in those fateful days. Some twenty years afterwards the late Emperor Alexander III's younger brother, the Grand Duke Vladimir, a man of great intelligence, of a liberal turn of mind, and profoundly devoted to his elder brother and Sovereign, told me that one evening, some ten or fourteen days after the tragic end of Alexander II,

he had received a short note from the Emperor, in which he wrote: "I have made up my mind at last to confirm and publish our father's manifesto, and I feel happy now, as if a heavy load had been taken off my shoulders." Unfortunately, before this momentous decision could have taken effect, the Emperor was approached by that notorious bigotted reactionary, Pobiedonostzeff, then holding the office of Procurator of the Holy Synod, with the most earnest and weighty representations to the effect that he, as the reigning Sovereign, whatever his personal preferences might be, had no right to deprive his future successor, the heir to the throne, of even the smallest tittle of the inheritance of illimited power which would be rightfully coming to him under the fundamental laws of the land. The Emperor, who was not gifted with a very clear insight in matters of statecraft, but was imbued with a sincere and profound reverence for the law, allowed himself to be shaken in his resolve by the specious arguments of Mr. Pobiedonostzeff, who might justly be called the evil genius of Russia. The result was that Alexander II's intended manifesto was suppressed, and instead appeared a manifesto in which the new Emperor announced his firm intention to govern the country in strict accordance with the traditions of his forefathers. This manifesto had been drafted and submitted to the Emperor's signature by the Procurator of the Holy Synod without the knowledge of his colleagues; whereupon the three Liberal Ministers, Count Loris-Melikoff, Mr. Abaza, and General Miliutine, asked and were allowed to resign.

The appearance of this manifesto produced a profound impression. Its firm and unequivocal language was hailed with satisfaction by the overwhelming majority of the Russian people. It restored confidence in the unshaken power of the Government, in the security of the State, and the stability of the existing social order.

It seems to me that a similar feeling was largely shared by the outside world as well. A nation, numbering some hundred and fifty million, and occupying almost one-seventh part of the surface of the inhabitable globe, represents too large a factor in the history of the world for its condition and destiny to be a matter of indifference to the rest of mankind. When the blind passions born of the World

War shall have calmed down, it will be realized that the destruction and dismemberment of the Russian Empire, and the abandonment of the Russian nation to anarchy and civil war, means an unmitigated disaster for all Europe.

Unfortunately, Western public opinion and, following its lead, part of the Russian "Intelligentzia," are inclined to forget that the bulk of the Russian nation, the mainstay of her power and prosperity, in other words the Russian peasantry, little more than half a century ago were still slaves, although euphemistically called serfs, that slavery is a poison that affects the mentality of the slave as well as that of the master, and that, with the exception of a thin layer of high-grade civilization on top, the Russian people are as little ripe now, as the English people of the fifteenth or sixteenth century would be, for political institutions and political life.

It stands to reason, however, that although a sudden and complete abandonment of a system of government which had built up and consolidated an immense empire, and was the only means of holding together its heterogeneous component parts, could only lead, as indeed it has led, to a catastrophe; still, on the other hand, persistency in withholding concessions which the spirit of the times imperatively demanded was bound in the end to have no less fatal consequences. The so-called "Intelligentzia" was but a shade less disqualified than the popular masses for the task of directing a great empire. The Duma leaders, when power was literally thrust upon them, could only demonstrate their utter incompetence to govern, or even to maintain themselves in power for any length of time. Little else could, of course, have been expected from people who never have had any experience in handling affairs of State. Count Loris-Melikoff's plan of reform, by opening the doors of the council of the Empire to elected representatives of the educated and property-owning class, would have enabled them gradually to acquire such experience. The failure by the Emperor Alexander III to adopt and carry through this plan of reform was, in the opinion of the great majority of my thinking fellow-countrymen, the direst misfortune that could have befallen our country. It was the absence of these qualities in his unfortunate successor that led



ultimately to the catastrophe in which he perished himself, and with him the woman who ruined his life and the poor innocent martyred ones whom he loved so dearly.

Early in January 1882 my chief was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States, and I was again left in charge of the Legation, a very favourable chance for a young beginner in the diplomatic career. Moreover, a conference having been opened for the revision of the treaties between Japan and the foreign Powers, I was appointed to represent Russia.

The object of the conference on the part of the Japanese Government was to obtain a revision of the existing treaties in a sense favourable to their desire to be treated on a footing of equality with the Western Powers. The most objectionable feature of the treaties from the Japanese point of view were: the absence of any provision for their termination or periodical revision, the immutable fixing of a customs tariff establishing import duties limited to 5 per cent. *ad valorem*, and the absolute exemption of the persons and properties of subjects of foreign Powers from Japanese jurisdiction, this last being the most galling of all to the national pride of the Japanese.

In 1878 the United States had broken loose from the policy of co-operation theretofore pursued by the foreign Treaty Powers, and had concluded a treaty with Japan by which the right of the Japanese Government to establish customs duties on a basis of autonomy was recognized. But this treaty contained a stipulation providing for its not going into effect until similar treaties were concluded with the other Powers, and it therefore remained inoperative.

At last the reluctance of the Western Powers, headed as always by Great Britain, to approach this question of the revision of the treaty, was overcome, and a conference assembled, in January 1882, at Tokio, under the presidency of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Inouyé, and composed of the representatives of all the Treaty Powers. The negotiations proceeded smoothly, until the Minister brought forward a scheme doing away entirely with the extra-territoriality of foreigners and consular jurisdiction. Although these proposals were received with applause by the American Minister, the other representatives declared

they were obliged to report them for the consideration of their Governments, and the British Minister, Sir Harry Parkes, stated at once his disagreement with the Japanese plan. Thus it came about that the premature attempt of the Japanese Government to obtain release from the restrictions imposed by the existing treaties ended in failure, and the conference separated in July, after about five months of fruitless labour, without having achieved any positive result.

The failure of the conference to achieve the hoped-for result naturally caused much disappointment and irritation, and placed the Japanese Government in a rather embarrassing position, inasmuch as it disclosed the fruitlessness of all their endeavours to raise their country to a standing of equality with the foreign Powers. Popular irritation on this account grew apace as renewed endeavours to secure the revision of the treaty met with a similar fate, until, in 1886, it culminated in an attempt on the life of Mr. Okuma (later Count, and now Marquis Okuma), who was then Minister of Foreign Affairs. A dynamite bomb was thrown into his carriage with the effect that one of his legs was shattered and had to be amputated. He speedily recovered after the operation, and is still, according to latest accounts, very much alive and active, although he must be at least eighty-two or eighty-three years old. When I called on him on my return to Japan as Minister in 1897, and complimented him on his hale and hearty appearance, he said laughingly: "I owe all this to the loss of my leg, because, you see, Nature has provided man with vital force calculated for a given size of his body; therefore, one of a man's limbs being cut off, the expenditure of his supply of vital force is thereby reduced by so much, and consequently enables the rest of the body to last so much longer." The theory sounds cheerful, and may be true if applied in moderation.

At the time I am writing of—the early eighties—the adoption, not only of foreign institutions, but also of foreign habits of life, clothes, customs, and even amusements, was fostered by the Government by every possible means. Mr. Inouyé (later Count and Marquis) was then Minister of Foreign Affairs, and was foremost in setting an example in this respect. He was childless himself, but he had an



adopted son, Katsunosuke, and an adopted daughter, whose Japanese name I do not remember, but who we all used to call Miss Bessie. They were both very charming young people, had been to school in England, spoke English perfectly, and were extremely popular in foreign circles in Tokio. Their presence helped greatly to make the Minister's house a centre of sociability. The Russian Legation being situated across the street from the Foreign Office, I was a frequent guest of the pleasant family circle of the Inouyés. My charming young friends, the adopted son and daughter of Mr. Inouyé, who were not related to each other at all, although being, as is quite customary in Japan, adopted into the same family, were married a few years later, and I was delighted, when I was in London in the summer of 1916, to find them as Marquis and Marchioness Inouyé presiding at the Japanese Embassy at Grosvenor Square.

In the summer of 1883, Sir Harry Parkes was transferred to Peking after eighteen years' service as Minister to Japan. During his term of office he had witnessed the downfall of the Shogunate, the restoration of the Mikado, and the birth of new Japan. In the beginning of the new regime, which he at once rightly judged would be a lasting one, disagreeing in this respect with the views of his French colleague, he rendered most valuable services to the rising Japanese statesmen. In later years, although the British Government's policy was primarily interested in maintaining intact the restrictions which the original treaties imposed on the liberty of action of Japan, and therefore the British representative was compelled to oppose Japanese endeavours to free themselves from these restrictions, Sir Harry Parkes, nevertheless, had been able to assist the Japanese Government with most valuable advice.

His services were highly appreciated by the Japanese Government, and their appreciation found expression on the occasion of Sir Harry Parkes' death in a dispatch of condolence addressed to the British Government. Faithful remembrance and loyal recognition of services rendered are among the most attractive traits of the Japanese national character.

I entertained the highest regard for Sir Harry Parkes, and he always treated me with the kindly friendliness so

characteristic of his disposition. Our personal relations had always been most cordial, but we had never had any occasion to touch upon the subject of the relations between our Governments. When he was making his farewell calls and came to bid me good-bye, we had a little talk on this subject, in regard to which I think we were both agreed that the policy of covert antagonism between them could do neither side any good. Speaking of the policy both Governments were pursuing, or seemed to be pursuing, in regard to Japan, he asked me what object our Government could have in favouring to some extent the Japanese pretensions, considering that the interests of all foreign Powers in Japan were, after all, identical, and that Russia could not possibly wish to see Japan grow into a strong Power that might some day threaten her Far Eastern possessions. I could only reply that our Government's attitude was probably due more to a natural inclination to favour the weaker side than to any conscious intention to antagonize the British Government's policy in Japan, and that, at any rate, such intention could hardly be incriminated to them with any more reason than a similar intention could be attributed to Great Britain on account of her favouring Turkish interests in the Near East.

## CHAPTER VII

A visit to Washington—Return to Russia—Interior political situation—Effect of the Emperor's firm policy, both domestic and foreign—Sergius Witte—De Giers—Ferdinand of Bulgaria—Causes of failure to be appointed Diplomatic Agent to Bulgaria—Appointment as Consul-General in New York.

IN the autumn of 1883 a new Minister to Japan was appointed in the person of Mr. A. Davydoff, Councillor of our Embassy in London, who had previously for some time occupied the post of Diplomatic Agent in Bulgaria. Upon his arrival at Tokio the term of my service in Japan came to an end, and I might have started at once for home if my successor had not asked me to stay with him as his guest a couple of weeks longer, to initiate him into the intricacies of the political situation in Japan and facilitate his debut in the social world of Tokio. I gladly complied with his request, the more so as it gave me a chance to gather a great deal of information about our Near Eastern affairs. He told me that when he had his farewell audience of the Emperor, H.M. had spoken of the unsatisfactory state of things in Bulgaria, and had incidentally mentioned that it was his intention to appoint me to Sofia as soon as another appointment could be found for the actual incumbent of the post. From what Mr. Davydoff told me of the situation in Bulgaria I did not conceive a very favourable impression of the part I was expected to play in the further development of our Near Eastern policy, should my appointment to that post really take place. In the meantime, however, having been granted several months' leave of absence, I made up my mind to spend a month or so on my way home at Washington on a visit to the family of my former chief.

I found the Struve family comfortably installed in the

fine house built some years before by the beautifier of the city of Washington, Mr. Shephard, familiarly called Boss Shephard. He had been Commissioner of the District of Columbia, and as such he had done a great deal towards making Washington what it is now, one of the most beautiful towns, if not the most beautiful town in the world. He had been extremely popular, but had experienced some financial reverses that had compelled him to leave Washington for Mexico in seeking to make a new fortune. I do not know whether he succeeded in this, but a couple of years later, when I was Chargé d'Affaires, he paid a visit to Washington and met with a very enthusiastic popular reception, including a torchlight procession in his honour. In the meantime his house had been placed in the hands of a receiver, and had been rented for a term of years to the Russian Legation.

Mr. de Struve, his charming and clever wife, with their family of four sweet little girls and a baby boy, I found were very popular, and Mrs. de Struve in her "carry-all," with the five children and their little Japanese friend, Djuri Saigo, had become quite an institution, and was to be seen every day driving in the beautiful avenues bordered with shade trees, or in the road leading into the country known as Pierce's Mill Road.

After about a month spent most agreeably as a guest at the Legation, I left for St. Petersburg, where I arrived in January 1884.

The third year of the Emperor Alexander III's reign was drawing to a close, and I found a noticeable change for the better in the social atmosphere of the capital from the vague feeling of unrest and insecurity that pervaded all circles of Russian society in the two last years of Alexander II's life. The Emperor had become, and during all the time of his short reign remained, extremely popular with the masses of the people; that is to say, with at least 90 per cent. of the nation.

The contributory causes of this popularity were partly of a purely personal nature: the Emperor's sturdy character, his unshakable will, his limpid honesty of purpose, his exemplary family life, all endeared him to his people. Furthermore, his firmness in following the line of policy



once adopted gave the nation a feeling of security which had been largely absent during the reign of his predecessor. The Russian people love a masterful head of a household, of a business, and so forth ; in short, what is expressed by the untranslatable word *khozain*. The American expression " boss " comes perhaps nearest to rendering its meaning. The people love a masterful *khozain*, because they instinctively feel that nothing, no family, no business, can prosper without a firm will to direct it.

The firm, unshakable will was there. Had it been combined with a deeper insight into the growing political needs of the nation, it might have been of inestimable benefit to the country's peaceful development. But, unfortunately, this insight was absent. Instead of fostering local self-government through the " Zemstvos " and municipalities, by gradually enlarging their field of activity and emancipating them from the control of the administration, the Government adopted and pursued with great and most regrettable consistency the very opposite policy. Where it was not deemed advisable openly to repeal laws dating from the reformatory epoch of Alexander II's reign, advantage was being taken of every possible loophole in their stipulations to narrow the field of activity of these institutions of local self-government, to curtail the limits of their authority, and to extend the right of interference of the administration. The result showed itself in the gradual desertion by the better element of the local " *Intelligentsia* " of a field of activity, the conditions of which had become so discouraging and in a consequent gradual deterioration of the personal element composing the " Zemstvos " and municipalities, and a gradual falling off in their efficiency.

Likewise in the matter of popular education the Government adopted a reactionary policy which materially retarded the enlightenment of the masses of the people and thereby caused incalculable damage to the country. Every possible difficulty was placed in the way of the opening of popular schools by the " Zemstvos " as well as by private landowners on their estates. Only parochial schools kept by the clergy were favoured by the Government, as offering a better guarantee of the bringing up of the youth of the country in conservative principles of law and order and respect for

the authority of Church and State. It must be owned, however, that the lower strata of the "Intelligentzia," from which the staff of popular school teachers had necessarily to be drafted were, more or less to a man, imbued with socialistic or otherwise subversive ideas and most eager to impart them to the rising generation of the peasantry as a preparation for the overthrow of the existing social order.

However, the fatal results of the domestic policy pursued during the reign of Alexander III did not make themselves felt at once. On the contrary, the country never was more prosperous, nor presented to the world a more impressive appearance of power and unshakable solidity. This was primarily due to the greatness of the country, its teeming population, its unbounded wealth and inexhaustible natural resources, and, last but not least, to restored confidence in the Government, thus furnishing a new illustration of the truth of the saying that even the worst policy is better than a policy of vacillation between right and wrong, or, worst still, no definite policy at all.

Among the contributory causes of this happy state of affairs the first place must be allotted to the Emperor's personal character, his honesty, his faithfulness to those he trusted, his inaccessibility to Court influences and intrigues of whatsoever kind. These qualities gained him the entire devotion of those to whom he had given his confidence and who, in their turn, could implicitly rely on his support. It was not easy for the new Sovereign to make a choice of men he could entrust with the conduct of affairs, and it is not to be wondered at that in this he was not always successful. It is greatly to his credit that when he had reason to hold that a statesman he had chosen himself, or inherited from his father, like the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. de Giers, deserved his confidence, he would keep him in power to the end. In this respect he followed in the footsteps of his great ancestress, the Empress Catherine II, who certainly was a past-mistress in statecraft. When asked by the French Ambassador by what mysterious charm she managed to govern such an immense empire with apparently so little trouble and effort, she replied: "The secret is a simple one; I take great care in choosing the men to whom



I intend to give important posts, but once I have appointed a man whom I consider worthy of my confidence, I keep him in his post to the end of his life. Everybody knows it, and therefore nobody tries to intrigue against him, and that saves me a world of trouble."

In one of his appointments the Emperor was particularly fortunate. That was the appointment of Sergius Witte, first as Minister of Roads and Public Works, and then as Minister of Finance. This remarkable man, a truly self-made man, who, from very modest beginnings, had worked up his way to the highest position in the State solely by his own strength of will and superior intellect, towered head and shoulders above the crowd of respectable nonentities, forming the upper stratum of the Bureaucracy, to which, under existing conditions of Russian political life, the Sovereign's choice was limited. It is the undying merit of Alexander III that he saw and appreciated the inestimable value of Witte's services, and that he gave him his firm support until the end. Had he lived he certainly never would have parted with that great statesman, and between them they would surely have preserved Russia from ruin and disintegration, and no less surely the world would have been spared the catastrophe of the Great War, the disastrous consequences of which do not seem to be realized as yet to their full and sinister extent.

Being, in spite of all his faults and shortcomings, a truly great man, the number of his enemies was legion, especially in both extreme camps, that of the reactionaries as well as that of the revolutionaries. A most whole-hearted and loyal patriot, he was accused of being a traitor. By nature and by conviction himself rather an autocrat, he was accused of trying to undermine the monarchy (this relates, of course, to the time of Nicholas II), of being secretly in league with the revolutionaries, and so forth. Being the author of the manifesto of October 17, 1915, embodying the grant of a constitution, he was accused by the revolutionaries of being an enemy of liberty and of the people. By the Liberal parties, who refused him their countenance when he had succeeded in obtaining from Nicholas II his consent to the grant of a moderate constitution by assuring the Emperor that this concession would rally to his throne the support

of these parties, he was accused of being shifty, of being what is called a "trimmer." He had to be, because since the death of Alexander III, having lost his loyal and unflinching support, there was no other means of maintaining himself in power. He was accused of an immoderate ambition to return to power after the assassination of Stolypine during the last few years of Nicholas II's reign. As a true patriot it was his bounden duty to entertain such an ambition and to pursue it to the last possibility, because he knew into what feeble hands power had fallen, and could foresee the awful catastrophe which the men at the helm would be quite incompetent even to try to avert from our unhappy country.

The author of these reminiscences feels the more impelled to render homage to the memory of the greatest man Russia has produced in a century, whose premature loss was the direst misfortune, because there was a time, happily long forgotten, when, on account of a divergence of opinion in regard to certain features of our policy in Manchuria, he incurred the hostility of that great statesman and patriot, whose cordial friendship it was his good fortune to win later on, after a memorable collaboration in the settlement of the Russo-Japanese War.

Another wise decision of the Emperor Alexander III was the confirmation as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mr. de Giers, who had been acting in that capacity during the last years of the reign of Alexander II. Mr. de Giers was by no means brilliant, but he was an eminently safe statesman, level-headed and prudent, averse to any policy of adventure, and thoroughly convinced of the necessity for Russia to devote herself to cultural tasks and the development of her natural resources.

In the time before the Russo-Turkish War, Alexander III, then heir to the throne, was to some extent influenced by the doctrines of Slavophilism, which in those days swayed the public mind, as far at least as the educated classes were concerned, and indeed led up to the intervention of Russia in the Bulgarian question, and consequently to the outbreak of war with Turkey. He had, however, returned from the Balkan campaign, during which he had been in command of one of the armies, considerably sobered down, and

determined never to let his country be drawn again into war, all the horrors of which he had had ample occasion to become acquainted with.

In the very beginning of his reign the Emperor had to deal with manifold complications in connection with the newly created principality of Bulgaria, over which Russia claimed a semi-acknowledged and ill-defined protectorate. The vacillating policy pursued by the Russian Government in that country, which owed its liberation from the Turkish yoke exclusively to Russia, led to mutual estrangement and embitterment, and finally resulted in the expulsion from Bulgaria of Prince Alexander, who had originally been Russia's nominee, but who had failed to give satisfaction. These vacillations had landed us in such a seemingly inextricable muddle, that the Emperor Alexander III made up his mind to take a step at once the most radical and the most effective. He ordered all Russian representatives, diplomatic, military and consular, to be withdrawn and all relations with Bulgaria to be broken off. With characteristic firmness and consistency he held on to his resolve to the end of his life, and never recognized Prince Ferdinand of Coburg as the newly elected Prince of Bulgaria. His example, out of deference for Russia, was followed by all the Great Powers, for such was the international position Alexander III had won for his country almost from the beginning of his reign. They all withheld their formal recognition of Prince Ferdinand to the throne of Bulgaria until after the reconciliation between Russia and Bulgaria in the second year of the reign of the Emperor Nicholas II. Even Austria-Hungary did not separate herself in this respect from the other Great Powers, although the election of Prince Ferdinand, who was an officer in the Austrian Army and a wealthy landowner in Hungary, had been largely due to Austro-Hungarian intrigues.

Nevertheless, Prince Ferdinand was able to carry on his government with considerable success. So much so, that when a French relative of his—his mother was Princess Clementine of Orleans, a daughter of King Louis Philippe—asked him how he felt in his new position as ruler of Bulgaria, he was reported to have replied that he felt quite happy, enjoying himself in the position of a



flea, happening to be in a place which nobody dares to scratch.

The rupture of relations with Bulgaria provoked at first considerable dissatisfaction among the "Intelligentsia," with Slavophile leanings, as it seemed to run counter to a policy aiming at the ultimate reunion of all branches of the Slav race under the hegemony of Russia, which is the pet object of their dreams, and to which they probably cling even now with the purblind obstinacy of visionary doctrinaires. However, the visibly growing prestige and weight of Russia in international politics, so flattering to national pride contributed greatly towards reconciling the "Intelligentsia" to the shortcomings of the domestic policy of the Government and towards increasing the Emperor's popularity among all classes.

Although Alexander III may have lacked both experience and deeper insight into international politics, he seemed to be guided by an instinctive realization of the truth that the only rational policy for Russia to follow would be the same which Washington recommended to the United States; that is to say, avoidance of any entangling alliances whatsoever. Having cut loose from the alliance of the three Emperors, he succeeded, without any apparent conscious effort, in securing for Russia the most brilliant position she had ever held in world politics, that of holding the balance of power in Europe, inasmuch as, thanks to Russia's overshadowing strength, albeit more potential than real, no general war could be brought about without her consent or connivance. The Franco-Russian alliance, the modest beginnings of which he had initiated, had not during his lifetime assumed the character and the scope it acquired under Nicholas II by inaugurating the sharp division of Europe into two irreconcilably hostile camps, which was bound to lead, and did lead, to the world catastrophe brought on by one of the Powers concerned resorting to the criminal folly of a preventive war. And that was the reason why the untimely passing of Alexander III was lamented by the whole civilized world as the disappearance of the one immovable barrier against any attempt at disturbing the world's peace.

When I arrived in St. Petersburg in January 1884 the

Bulgarian muddle seemed to be at its worst, our Diplomatic Agent at Sofia, rightly or wrongly, being blamed for it, and the question of his transfer to another post had become a pressing one. In my first interview with my chief I was informed that it was intended to send me to Bulgaria as Diplomatic Agent, and that I was to hold myself in readiness to proceed to my new destination at the first notice. This notice, however, never came, for reasons which shed some light on the way such personal questions are often dealt with by foreign departments more or less everywhere.

The appointment which was finally made was quite in harmony with bureaucratic usages as they prevail in all bureaucracies under the sun. The Minister wished to appoint his son to the post of First Secretary to another important Legation, which necessitated the promotion of the man who occupied that post to some superior position. But no such position being at the time available, except that of Diplomatic Agent in Bulgaria, to which, for personal reasons, the gentleman to be removed in order to make room for the Minister's son could not be appointed, a third person had to be dislodged from his post and shifted to Bulgaria. This was done, with unsatisfactory results, as the appointee who thus accidentally secured the coveted prize did not prove a success.

Thanks to these combinations, I was left out in the cold, which circumstance, according to bureaucratic conceptions of justice and equity, gave me a claim to some future preferment. Besides, I was sincerely glad to escape being mixed up, even in a subordinate capacity, in our Balkan policies, the aims of which I held to be not only ill-defined, but also practically unattainable, and therefore apt only to draw us into dangerous complications without any reasonable promise of substantial advantages to be derived from their realization. And so, as a matter of fact, I was not in the least disgruntled about my failure to get the appointment. To the great astonishment, and probably delight, of the Foreign Office authorities, I applied at once for the post of Consul-General at New York, which had just become vacant, although a consular post was much below the preferment I had a right to expect in the diplomatic line.

My application was, of course, immediately granted,



and the more readily as its satisfaction extinguished my claim to compensation and created a vacancy which could be utilized for placating somebody else, or somebody else's friends or protectors.

My appointment, although it seemed to put an end to my diplomatic career, gave me the chance for which I had been yearning all the time, of establishing my headquarters in America for a good long while.

## CHAPTER VIII

Return to America—Consulate-General in New York—Election of President Cleveland—Anglo-Russian relations—In charge of the Russian Legation in Washington—Relations with the President and members of his Administration—Conclusion of an extradition treaty.

FED as a boy very much on James Fenimore Cooper's delightful stories, it had then already been my favourite dream of finding myself some day in the wondrous land that had been the home of the "Leatherstocking" of his friend, the "Big Serpent," and of the "Last of the Mohicans." When I grew older and began the study of American history, I was fascinated by everything that related to that glorious struggle against oppression of a people to whom freedom was dearer than life. George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, were my boyhood's heroes, and I could recite by heart the Declaration of Independence. When some twenty years ago I read Weir Mitchell's beautiful novel *Hugh Wynn*—to my mind the next best historical novel after Tolstoy's *War and Peace*—it reminded me of the dreams of my boyhood and made me feel as if I had been living through those stirring events myself. In the little seaside town where I went to school, an American Consulate had just been established and the Consul had raised a mast, from which waved the Stars and Stripes. After school hours, instead of going home I used to steal away every now and then and run up to the American Consulate to take off my cap to the flag that represented to my boyish mind an emblem, of what, I could not exactly define, but which I felt deeply.

The indulgent reader of these reminiscences may be astonished to learn that such were the feelings of a Russian

boy in the sixties of the last century. But I can assure the reader that this particular boy was not the only one ; there must have been hundreds of them in Russia, and surely many thousands in all Europe, who felt like this. Those were the days when the gigantic flow of immigration was at its height. America was not only the land of promise and the blessed haven of refuge to the oppressed and hopeless, it was also the beginning of the realization of their dreams to the believers in a better future for mankind. And to think that in this happy land, which popular affection has christened " God's Country " there should be found those who strive to undermine the Constitution—that most wonderful piece of work ever struck off by the hand of mortal man, as Gladstone said of it—and that these people should find sympathizers and fashionable audiences to applaud their ravings—it is enough to make one feel as if the world had gone mad.

Before leaving Russia this time I had married, and the day after the ceremony we started on our wedding trip to New York, where we arrived in June 1884, after a short visit to London and to the Isle of Wight. Our friends, the Struves, had taken for the summer a seaside cottage at Bristol, Rhode Island, and we joined them there as soon as I had succeeded in arranging about the Consulate-General running itself, which in those days presented no difficulties whatever. We arrived there just in time for the celebration of Independence Day, and took part in the Fourth of July procession and parade, listened to the reading of the Declaration of Independence, and on our way home nearly came to grief through the horses taking fright at some fire-crackers which enthusiastic boy patriots had thrown under their feet.

We returned to town in October, when the presidential campaign was in full blast and the town was resounding with the blare of brass bands and the shouting of election cries by enormous and enthusiastic processions. My young wife, to whom all this was a never-dreamt-of novelty, took the keenest interest in all these proceedings ; the carpets in our apartment were littered with newspaper extras and campaign literature, making our little drawing-room look like the headquarters of a " District Leader." And on one

occasion I was actually sent to the Union Club in the middle of the night to find out the latest election news.

I considered it a particularly happy coincidence that, in the very beginning of my career in this country, it should have been my privilege to watch the actual functioning of the electoral system of a great and free nation under circumstances of particular stress and gravity, when the question of the return to power of one of the two great political parties, after a quarter of a century's monopolization of the government by the other party, was hanging in the balance. Both parties were numerically more or less evenly matched; both had put forward their strongest candidates, one a statesman of brilliant attainments and magnetic personality, the other a man of the sturdiest character, of the same honesty and firmness of will that characterized his contemporary, the Emperor Alexander III. Feeling on both sides was naturally running very high, and when the final result of the election was dependent on the vote of the State of New York, which in its turn depended on the result of the counting of the votes cast in one of the remotest rural counties of the State, necessitating some delay, the intensity of the strain on the popular impatience seemed to have reached the breaking-point.

I was greatly interested in observing the behaviour of the crowds that all day long, and far into the night, were waiting in front of the newspaper offices watching the bulletin boards with the latest figures of the election returns. The excitement was very great, and one could overhear some rather wild talk; but at bottom, one always felt, there was a solid foundation of common sense and cheerful good nature, which was entirely reassuring. When, at last, the final result, ultimately decided by a majority of barely a thousand and some odd votes in one of the backwoods counties of New York State, was announced, the popular acquiescence all over the country was immediate and absolute. It was an inspiring spectacle to witness—the spectacle of a great people settling a momentous question in a spirit of law-abiding submission to the will of the majority, however numerically insignificant. And this is the people to whom some self-seeking demagogues, or deluded cranks, vaunt the superior merits of Bolshevism,



a minority tyranny exercised over the unfortunate Russian people by a sanguinary band, partly of demented fanatics, partly of scoundrelly bandits, under the guise of a dictatorship of the proletariat.

The newly elected President had to face a task of no little difficulty, that of forming his Cabinet. Under the two-parties system, as practised in England, such a task is simplified by the fact that both parties always have a sufficient number of statesmen in their ranks who have already held office before and are competent and prepared to take office again at a moment's notice. It is different in the United States, where there is no official opposition, in the English sense. The Democratic Party had been out in the cold for a quarter of a century, and it was quite natural that there should be in its ranks a dearth of human material from which an efficient Cabinet could be readily selected. Mr. Cleveland brought to this task his sound judgment and knowledge of men, and surrounded himself with an official family of rare distinction in every respect. Such men as Mr. Bayard, Mr. Endicott, Mr. Whitney, Mr. Manning, and after his death Mr. Fairchild, were a credit not only to their party, but to the nation, and powerfully helped to make the first Democratic Administration since the war an unqualified success. Mr. Cleveland possessed also another quality which characterizes a great ruler, that of knowing how to win the attachment and devotion of his subordinates. I doubt whether there ever was a Cabinet the members of which were so sincerely, so unitedly, and so lastingly devoted to their chief as President Cleveland's official family showed itself after he had left the Presidency.

Having witnessed the installation in power of the new regime, which took place in a way entirely auspicious from every point of view, we returned to New York, and I resumed my duties as Consul-General.

In the spring of that year (1884) the relations between Great Britain and Russia again became strained in connection with a frontier incident in Central Asia. A certain General Komaroff, who was in command of a detachment of troops in Southern Turkestan near the frontier of Afghanistan, as a result of some trouble with the natives, had seen fit, in order to punish them, to cross the River Kushk, which



forms the frontier, and on recrossing the river to establish a military post at a place some twelve miles from the river. This particular point being at a distance from Herat of barely sixty miles, and the establishment of a Russian military post at this point being considered a menace, not only to Afghanistan, a British protectorate, but also to India, a subject in regard to which English public opinion has always been exceedingly touchy, this unimportant frontier incident caused considerable tension in the relations between the two governments. There even was a moment when this tension seemed to be likely to bring about an open rupture. Fortunately, thanks to the firmness of the Emperor Alexander III and to the good sense of the British Government, this little misunderstanding was after a while settled to mutual satisfaction and the danger of a possible war blew over.

During the short period that this tension had lasted, two little incidents happened which in the light of the present relations between the two great English-speaking nations appear to be simply ludicrous, but which at the time served as an example of the persistency of international resentments in continuing to influence the popular mind long after the causes of such resentments have been removed or forgotten.

One morning when I was busy writing in my room at the Consulate I overheard a voice in the outer office inquiring whether the Consul-General was in, and upon being told that he was, the owner of the voice, a grey-haired gentleman of military bearing, came straight up to my desk without further ado and said : " Excuse my intruding. I am an old soldier and have fought for the Union all through the war. Your country was ready then to help us. I have come to tell you that if ever you go to fight the Britishers there will be hundreds of thousands of us to come and fight by your side. That's all I wanted to say." Having delivered himself of this declaration, he walked out of my room without ever having given me the chance to thank him for the expression of his sympathy and to assure him that, as long as the Emperor lived, Russia would never go to war with anyone, least of all with Great Britain, with whom we had no really serious conflict of interests to divide us.

The other incident happened while I was at a dinner given by my colleague, the British Consul-General, in honour of the captain of a British cruiser, who had arrived probably for the purpose of watching the movements of a Russian cruiser anchored in the North River. While the Consul-General, the Captain and I were enjoying a friendly chat after the departure of the other guests, a seafaring Irishman, by name, I believe, Captain Boynton, who was the inventor of a rubber costume enabling a man to keep afloat in the water for any length of time, had let himself, dressed in his costume, be carried by the current down the North River until he reached the British cruiser anchored in the Upper Bay, and, profiting by the darkness of the night, had succeeded, without being observed, in fixing a dummy torpedo to the side of the vessel. The presence of that might-have-been-murderous apparatus was only discovered at daybreak, so the story went. The next day the newspapers were full of sensational descriptions of Captain Boynton's exploit and more or less sarcastic comments on its success. But then those were times when Congressman Tom Ochiltree's endeavours to "twist the lion's tail" had not yet been relegated to the limbo of oblivion.

In the summer of the same year I secured a few months' leave, and we went home to St. Petersburg and, having obtained an extension of leave, spent the winter there. When we returned to New York in June 1886, we were met at the dock by Mr. Iswolsky, First Secretary of Legation, and temporarily in charge of the Legation at Washington in the absence of Mr. de Struve, who had gone to Europe to join his family. Mr. Iswolsky announced that he had the day before received a cable ordering him to return to St. Petersburg at once, as he was to be appointed Diplomatic Agent in Bulgaria, and to turn the Legation at Washington over to me to act as temporary *Chargé d'Affaires* until the Minister's return. In consequence of this arrangement we gave up a little house I had rented in New York in 18th Street, which was then still a fairly fashionable neighbourhood, and moved into the Shephard House on the corner of K Street and Connecticut Avenue, which was then occupied by our Legation.

In those days it was not the fashion to desert Washington for the summer months, and all the official world, from the President down, as well as most of the Legations, remained in town in spite of the tropical heat. President Cleveland had just married, and after a short honeymoon trip had installed in the White House one of the most charming hostesses the Executive Mansion had ever sheltered. Mrs. Cleveland, who was very young and strikingly handsome, shortly afterwards held a reception for the diplomatic body, which she carried off with a charm of manner and graceful dignity of bearing that filled us all with profound admiration.

In the autumn I received instructions to propose to the Government of the United States the conclusion of an extradition treaty. Influenced by the murder of the Emperor Alexander II, Russia had, in 1881, invited the Powers to hold an international conference at Brussels for consideration of the proposal that thenceforth no murder or attempt to murder ought to be regarded as a political crime. But the conference did not take place, since Great Britain and France declined to take part in it. In 1885 Russia concluded treaties with Prussia and Bavaria which stipulated the extradition of all individuals who had made an attack on the life of a monarch, or of a member of his family, or who had committed any kind of murder or attempt to murder. It was considered very desirable that a similar treaty should be concluded with the United States, where many Russian revolutionaries, implicated in conspiracies or attempts against the life of the Emperor, were supposed to have found an asylum.

When I approached the Secretary of State, Mr. Bayard, I met with the frank admission that an attempt against the life of the head of the Government, or of a member of his family, when such attempt comprises the act either of murder, or assassination, or poisoning, should not be considered a political offence, or an act connected with such an offence, or, in other words, an offence justifying a refusal to extradite the offender. The position taken in this matter by the Secretary of State had the entire approval of the President, and, although falling short of the expectation of our Government, was accepted by them as satis-

factory as far as it went. In March 1887 the treaty was duly signed and transmitted to the Senate, where, however, it was shelved for a long while, and was finally ratified, with some amendments, in the spring of 1893.

Shortly after the signature of the treaty Mr. de Struve sailed again for Europe, and I resumed charge of the Legation for two years more, with one interruption, until my departure for Mexico in 1890.



## CHAPTER IX

Election of President Harrison—Sir Lionel Sackville West—Mr. Blaine, Secretary of State—Negotiations regarding the fur seal industry—Special mission to Mexico—President Diaz—The Hawaiian Islands—Return to Russia and appointment as Minister to Mexico.

It is not for me to attempt to give, in these pages, an outline of the activity and achievements of Mr. Cleveland during his first Presidency, of which it was my good fortune to have been a sympathetic witness in my capacity as representative of a friendly Power. History will not fail to assign to him a place by the side of the greatest Presidents this country has known, by the side of Washington, of Jefferson, of Lincoln, and of Roosevelt.

The electoral contest of 1888 differed from the preceding one in its freedom from vituperation and bitterness, and was conducted by both sides with dignity and earnestness. It resulted in Mr. Harrison being elected by the votes of the electoral college in consequence of the State of New York having gone over to the Republican side.

Shortly before election day an incident occurred, in itself quite unimportant, but demonstrating the extreme sensitiveness of a proud people to even the most shadowy suspicion of an attempt on the part of a foreign Power, however friendly, to exercise an influence in the internal affairs of the nation. On one of the last days of October the newspapers published what purported to be copies of a correspondence exchanged between a Mr. Murchison and the British Minister, Sir Lionel Sackville West (later Lord Sackville), in which the latter was supposed to have given to his correspondent, who claimed to be a recently naturalized Englishman, certain advice meant to influence his vote in the coming election. As a matter of fact, the Murchison



letter was nothing but a trap set by an intriguing politician in the hope of eliciting from the British Minister some reply which might possibly serve as a basis for accusing the representative of a foreign Power of an attempt at interference in the internal affairs of the nation in favour of one of the parties in the electoral contest. This decoy letter was written and forwarded in the preceding summer, and reached the British Minister at his summer residence on the Massachusetts coast. He happened to be quite alone in the house when the letter arrived; it was also a rainy day and he had no other business on hand. He was known for his distaste for epistolary efforts of any length; on this occasion, however, he actually penned a three or four pages' reply, the sense of which was simply that President Cleveland's administration having in every respect been a most successful and creditable one, he did not see any reason for the desirability of a change. It was, of course, entirely out of the question that a professional diplomat of Lord Sackville's high character and wide experience could have said or written anything of a nature to compromise his Government in any possible way. This was also evidently the view taken by Mr. Bayard, the Secretary of State. When his attention was called by the newspaper representatives to Lord Sackville's letter as published in the Press and frankly acknowledged by him as authentic, he merely said that the right of the British Minister to express in his private correspondence his views on any subject whatsoever could not be questioned for a moment and that, besides, this particular letter of his did not contain anything that could be considered objectionable in any respect. Popular excitement, however, fastened upon the incident of the Murchison letter and the party managers insisted on something being done immediately in order to allay the feeling, aroused by this incident, which threatened to affect unfavourably the party's chances of victory in the impending election. The matter was complicated by the fact that a similar attempt had been made, evidently by the same person or persons, to entrap the Mexican Minister, Mr. Romero, with the result that he had returned to his correspondent a very curt reply to the effect that as representative of a foreign Power he

could not express any opinion whatever in regard to the internal political affairs of a friendly nation. The publication of this reply of the Mexican Minister, side by side with Lord Sackville's letter, was naturally intended to emphasize, so to speak, the seeming impropriety of the latter's expression of opinion. In short, the pressure brought to bear on the Administration was such that the Government felt compelled to demand the immediate recall of the British Minister and, there being no time to await the expected compliance with this demand, to send him "his passports," as diplomatic parlance has it. The summary character of these proceedings led to some temporary coolness in the relations between the two Governments, perhaps even more apparent than real, as the British Government could hardly fail to make some allowance for the exigencies of party warfare at election time. At any rate the appointment of Sir Julian Pauncefote as successor to Lord Sackville was delayed until after the inauguration of the newly elected President.

The return to power of the Republican Party brought with it the appointment, as Secretary of State, of the brilliant and extremely popular statesman who, as leader of his party, had four years before failed to reach the goal of his ambition. The Blaines, belonging to the set of old residents of the capital, where they had always occupied a prominent social position, had naturally many long-established relations with the diplomatic body, and we were not quite strangers to them. I was brought into closer relationship with the new Secretary of State in the transaction of some official business with which I had been entrusted by my Government, and which furnished me with an occasion to appreciate the elevation and the nobility of his character apart from the winning charm of his magnetic personality. It came about in this way: For some years the fur seal industry in the two groups of islands in the Behring Sea—one belonging to Russia and the other to the United States—had been suffering from the depredations of poachers who, having discovered the habitat of the seals in their periodical migrations, had begun to practice an indiscriminate extermination of them in the open sea to an extent which threatened the gradual extinction of the species. Both

Governments being interested in the protection of a valuable industry, the right to the exercise of which they had farmed out to the Alaska Commercial Company, and which moreover constituted the only means of subsistence of the native population of the islands, I had been instructed to study the question whether something could not be done, perhaps in co-operation with the Government of the United States, to put a stop to the depredations of the poachers. The difficulty in the way of any really effectual measures for suppressing the predatory operations of the poachers consisted in the generally accepted doctrine of international law in regard to the limitation of the jurisdictional power of States over their so-called territorial waters. This difficulty could obviously be overcome only by securing the acquiescence of the principal maritime Powers in a proposal, to be put forward by Russia and the United States, to undertake jointly the policing of the Behring Sea for the exclusive purpose of preventing the illegal killing of fur seals on the high seas. In obedience to the instructions received, I devised a plan of an agreement with the Government of the United States to cover such a proposal and duly submitted it to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This plan having been approved, I was instructed to begin at once negotiations on the subject with the Department of State. Mr. Blaine likewise approved the plan, when submitted to him, and we had very soon completed the drafting of the text of the proposed agreement. Before appending my signature to the agreement it was my duty to submit it for final approval to my Government and for authority to sign it as their plenipotentiary in their name. This was done immediately by cable, and we expected to receive, within a couple of days, our Government's approval in regard to which we did not entertain any doubt whatever, the agreement having been concluded in accordance with their own wishes. No reply, however, came, and having waited for it a couple of weeks in the sweltering heat of Washington, Mr. Blaine left for Bar Harbour, where I soon followed him, greatly annoyed by the failure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to reply to my cable, which had all the appearance of a disavowal of my action, although it had been undertaken solely in consequence of and in obedience



to their instructions. This naturally placed me in a most embarrassing position in regard to the Secretary of State, as he might have suspected me of having deceived him in regard to our Government's real position in the matter. And this is where Mr. Blaine showed himself as the high-minded, perfect gentleman he was. He not only never let me feel any of the displeasure which our Government's failure to act must necessarily have caused him, but he tried with the utmost delicacy and fine feeling, to console me as best he could in my manifestly painful embarrassment at first by saying that, as a matter of course, no very quick reply could be expected since "big bodies always move slowly," and finally, when months had passed without bringing any reply whatever, that it was plain that the Government's silence must be due to some circumstances which I could not possibly have foreseen, and for which I could not possibly be held responsible in any way.

In the beginning of winter the Minister, Mr. de Struve, returned to his post, and I was relieved of my duties of *Chargé d'Affaires*. Still no reply whatever had come from St. Petersburg, and the matter was allowed to drop.

It was only many years later, when the question of the protection of the fur seal industry had become a subject of international negotiations, that I learned accidentally why the proposed agreement with the United States, which I had negotiated under instructions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had been abandoned. In order to understand how it could have come about that an agreement with the United States, mutually advantageous to both sides, should have been abandoned, thereby depriving the United States of the support of Russia in a matter in which the interests of both Powers were absolutely identical, it will be necessary to explain the mode of the functioning of the Government machinery of those days. Under the autocratic regime there was no such thing as a "Cabinet," each Minister of State ruling his department quite independently, reporting to the Sovereign separately, and subject solely to the Sovereign's will and directions. The chaotic condition which a strict adherence to this system would have caused was mitigated through the custom which had gradually grown up of attempting to bring about some unity of action

in the following way: When an individual Minister had determined on some measure affecting, not only matters subject to his own department, but likewise matters of more or less general interest, he would request in writing the conclusions of those of his colleagues whose departments he would consider as more specially concerned in the matter in hand, and would then submit their conclusions along with his own project to the Sovereign for his ultimate decision. This had been the procedure adopted in the matter of the proposed agreement with the United States. The text of the agreement, as established between the Secretary of State and myself had been communicated, for their conclusion, to the Ministers of Finance, of the Interior, of the Imperial domains, and of the Navy. Their conclusions had been entirely favourable with the sole exception of that of the Minister of Marine. It turned out that the Naval Department had recently engaged the services, as legal adviser, of a lawyer of considerable ability to whom the agreement in question had been referred for his conclusion. He may have thought, perhaps, that a simple approval of the projected agreement, which could have been expressed in a few words, might possibly not have satisfied his employers. Be that as it may, the fact was that he had given a conclusion controverting the position taken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs upon the advice of its own counsel, Professor Martens, the universally known and respected authority on international law, upon the ground that the projected agreement might lead to complications with the leading maritime Powers which Russia was not, from a naval point of view, prepared to face. This alarmist view of the question seems to have impressed the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the extent of causing him to let the matter simply drop, apparently without taking into consideration that such a way of dealing with it might be considered by the Government of the United States little short of discourteous.

On the other hand, it seemed to have been conceded, as a matter of equity, that some compensation was due to me as the innocent victim of a situation for which I bore no responsibility, but which had left me in the highly embarrassing position of an agent practically disavowed



by his Government. This was evidently the reason why I was sent on a temporary mission to Mexico, in order to elucidate the question whether, in view of possible contingencies, it would be desirable to establish permanent diplomatic relations with that country, and I was privately given to understand that, in the eventuality of an exchange of diplomatic representatives between the two Governments being determined upon, I would be appointed as the first Minister from Russia to the United States of Mexico.

Part of the winter of 1889-1890 we spent at Washington awaiting the arrival of my instructions for the mission to Mexico. When they finally came we started for our new destination in the beginning of March. In those days it took six days and nights to reach Mexico City from Washington over the Southern Pacific Railroad as far as Eagle Pass and Ciudad Porfirio Diaz, on the other side of the Rio Grande, and then over the Mexican International and Mexican Central Railroads via Torreon and Zacatecas. At the station on the Mexican side of the river I was met by the local chief, the "Jefe Politico," with a message of welcome from the President. He also announced that he had received orders to place an armed escort at my disposal. This escort, in the shape of half a dozen braves with enormous "sombrosos," gigantic cruel-looking spurs, and armed to the teeth, was drawn up on the platform and presented a sufficiently formidable appearance to cause me to request the Jefe Politico to transmit to the President my best thanks for his welcome and his kind and considerate attention, together with the assurance that in a country under his government I felt quite as safe as in my own. Through the kind offices of a former colleague we had taken a furnished house for the three months that we proposed to spend in Mexico. On arrival we were driven to our temporary home, which turned out to be a beautiful palace known as the "casa de los asulejos"—which means "house of the blue tiles," so called because its outer walls were all covered with blue and white tiles interspersed with some yellow ones. It had originally been built by one of the direct descendants of Hernando Cortez and had of late years belonged to the Yturbe family. The house was in every respect a thing of beauty. It contained a private

chapel and a magnificent library of some twenty thousand volumes. On arrival I found, awaiting my signature, two most formidable-looking documents: one was a contract for the lease of the house for three months at so much per month payable in advance on the first day of each month, and containing a series of ironclad stipulations in the most elaborate Spanish legal parlance; the other was the inventory of all the contents of the house, including the library, quite a big and imposing volume. In signing these documents I felt that I had taken upon myself a heavy responsibility. I mention these details only because the sequel of events proved the groundlessness of my apprehensions in regard to my responsibilities. It so happened that we were compelled to cut short our intended stay in Mexico by a whole month, and when I sent to the agent of the Yturbe estate my cheque for the third month, he returned it to me through my interpreter with the explanation that he did not consider it "cavalleroso"—that is to say, "chivalrous" to accept payment of rent for a month during which I would not have the use of the house. I have had some experience, during a long life, of renting houses in half a dozen different countries in three-parts of the world, but I have never, before or after, had a cheque returned to me.

The next day I went to see the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Don Ignacio Mariscal. Mr. Mariscal was a most distinguished and experienced diplomat of the old school, who had been in charge of his country's foreign affairs all through—I had almost said "the reign"—the already numerous terms of General Diaz' Presidency, and who remained his Minister of Foreign Affairs to the end of his life. This, by the way, was one of the eminent qualities of Porfirio Diaz as a great ruler: all his Ministers, once appointed, could rely on being kept in office until the end, and, as far as I know, he had only once or twice an occasion to remove a Minister on account of inefficiency. Mr. Mariscal kindly offered to drive with me over to the National Palace, where the President had his office, and to present me to him quite informally, as my mission to Mexico so far was of an unofficial character.

When we were ushered into the President's private office I found myself in the presence of the most strikingly im-

pressive personality I had ever met. Of medium height, his well-knit body carried on its shoulders a head, every line of which and all his bearing denoted calm determination, boundless energy and conscious irresistible force, his countenance lit up by a pair of lustrous steel grey eyes full of the light of deep thought, commanding intellect and genuine kindness—in short, the personality of a born ruler of men who had been the creator of his country's greatness and prosperity. He received me with utmost cordiality as the representative of a country which was then one of the greatest empires in the world, with whom he was manifestly eager to establish diplomatic relations. He engaged me in a conversation, with the aid of Mr. Mariscal as interpreter, which soon assumed the tone of a friendly chat. When he asked me what had impressed me most in my journey through Mexico, I told him that it was the cemetery of Zacatecas. To his astonished question what I meant I explained that when our train was nearing the town of Zacatecas I noticed, on both sides of the road, innumerable white tombstones all of the same shape and size and bearing the same epitaph: "Here lies silver." This allusion to his country's buried wealth seemed to amuse him greatly, and he said that he hoped that when I would come to live in the country I would discover other sources of her prosperity which needed no tombstone to testify to their presence.

I had been reading up the history of the conquest of Mexico, one of the most romantic dramas of history, and I was greatly interested in visiting the sites where the great tragedy of an empire's conquest by a handful of Spanish adventurers had been enacted. Every afternoon we used to join the procession of carriages, bearing the wealth and fashion and beauty of Mexico, which would be rolling up and down the beautiful avenue—Paseo de la Reforma—leading up to the castle of Chapultepec, once so gallantly defended by Mexican cadets against the victorious troops of General Scott, and later on the summer residence of the unfortunate Emperor Maximilian, as well as of President Diaz. It was during these drives in the late afternoon that I first experienced that curious sensation of unaccountable gloom that would overcome me and seem to pervade all Nature at the near approach of sunset, a sensation that



I have ever since experienced at that hour everywhere in the tropics, where, by contrast, nothing can be more gloriously, more radiantly beautiful than the early morning hour just after sunrise. Especially was that the case in the beautiful evergreen valley of Mexico, in the centre of which stands the capital, surrounded by a chain of picturesque mountains overtopped by the two celebrated, snow-capped, extinct volcanoes with unpronounceable names.

It did not take me long to collect all the dates and information I needed for the purpose of drawing up my report on the result of my mission to Mexico. In presenting my conclusions I thoroughly discountenanced any expectations in regard to the possibility of establishing a coaling station or naval base somewhere on the Pacific coast of Mexico. In this I merely maintained the point of view I had developed as Chargé d'Affaires in Washington so far back as 1886 or 1887. Then the Naval Department, or some great personage connected with it, knowing the particular interest the Emperor Alexander III took in the development of our Navy, had raised the question of the desirability of the acquisition of the Hawaiian Islands as a naval station, and had been referred to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for an authoritative conclusion which would definitely settle the question. No responsible statesman could have for a moment countenanced such a fantastic plan, but bureaucratic red-tape required that the question should be referred to the person on the "spot," on whom part of the responsibility could thus be made to devolve. The nearest "spot" in this case being Washington, I was destined to share the responsibility for the necessary turning-down of the influential personage's proposal. So it came about that the matter was referred to me with instructions to forward my conclusion by cable, which I did unhesitatingly the very next day. The exact text of my reply I do not now remember, but its sense was as follows: That the Hawaiian Islands were a strategic point with the United States, even if they had no desire to acquire it for themselves, would certainly never suffer to fall into anybody else's hands and that, therefore, any suspected ambition in that direction on our part could only embroil us with a country with which it was in every respect to

our interest to maintain the most friendly relations ; furthermore, that, Russia being mainly a Continental Power, the acquisition of any outlying points not within reach of our communications by land and therefore impossible to defend effectually against superior naval forces, whilst perhaps useful to a limited extent in time of peace, would certainly, in time of war, merely serve to provide an easy prey for a first-class naval Power if such happened to be our enemy. The whole affair was promptly buried and forgotten, and no harm was done as the secret of this abortive idea did not leak out.

Having, so to speak, cut the grass from under my feet by opposing the idea of the possibility of utilizing any point on the Pacific coast of Mexico as a potential coaling station or naval base, thus depriving my well-meaning chief of a useful argument in favour of the establishment of a Legation in Mexico for my benefit, I nevertheless concluded in favour of the organization of a regular diplomatic representation upon the following grounds : first, that all the other Great Powers, with the exception of Austria-Hungary, which was still holding back, because of the memory of the unfortunate Emperor Maximilian, were represented in Mexico by Envoys Extraordinary and Ministers Plenipotentiary, and secondly that the United States of Mexico was unquestionably one of the most prosperous, most important and most solidly established Spanish-American Republics, in which latter respect, I regret to say, I was sadly mistaken, as recent events have shown.

By the end of the second month of our stay in Mexico I had finished the preparation of my report, and I made up my mind to return to New York. Besides, our hurried departure had become necessary on account of the state of the health of our baby daughter, which had begun to be most seriously affected by the rarified air of Mexico, the town being situated at an altitude of some eight thousand feet. The doctor told us that to save the child's life it was imperatively necessary to take her down to the sea-level into normal atmospheric condition without the least delay.

In New York we were able to consult that kindest of men, the celebrated children's physician, Dr. Jacobi, the babies' friend, who advised us, on arrival in Europe, to stop



at the first convenient place by the seaside, and to spend there the summer so as to enable the child to recuperate from the ill-effects of Mexico. Before embarking we had written to some friends in England asking for advice to which of the numerous seaside resorts we had better go. On arrival at Southampton we found letters from different friends, each one advising us to go to a different place, but every one warning us against going to the Isle of Wight, the climate there being "relaxing." Having had the wisdom to mistrust our own judgment and to ask for advice, we did the next wisest thing: we did not follow it. The Isle of Wight was so temptingly near, merely a stone's throw from Southampton. So we bravely crossed the Solent and went straight to Shanklin, a place that was endeared to us through memories of our wedding journey, when we had spent there several happy days.

Leaving my family at Shanklin comfortably settled in a charming little cottage called "Glenbrook," with a thatched roof and lovely garden, just near the entrance to the celebrated Shanklin Chine, I left for St. Petersburg to report on my mission. Arrived in St. Petersburg, I found that, although the question of my appointment as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Mexico was definitely settled in principle, it would take considerable time to push through the legislative measures necessary for the establishment of a new Legation. So I returned to Shanklin, where we stayed until the late autumn, greatly enjoying the quiet, restful life, the bracing sea air and beautiful surroundings. Late in October we went to London for a short stay, and then to Paris; from there I sent my family to Nice for the winter and went myself to St. Petersburg to await there my appointment to my new post. When it took place at last, in the beginning of January, I hastened to Nice to join my family and to prepare for our departure for Mexico.

At the last moment we decided not to expose our child's health to the risk of a prolonged sojourn in Mexico, and I left alone via New York, my wife and daughter going to Switzerland, where they proposed to make their home until I could join them, as I had been promised frequent leaves of absence from my post, where there was really hardly anything to do.

## CHAPTER X

Arrival in Mexico—An accident—Official reception by President Diaz—  
Visits to Switzerland—Final departure.

STARTING from New York early in June, I met, in the train, the Japanese Minister in Washington, Mr. Tatenō, who had been accredited likewise as Minister to Mexico, and who was going there to present his letters of credence. He was accompanied by the Foreign Secretary to his Legation, Mr. D. W. Stevens, an old friend and colleague of mine, who, before entering the Japanese service, had for many years been Secretary of the United States Legation in Tokio. With such agreeable companions I hardly noticed how the time passed until we reached a little station called Spofford on the Southern Pacific Railroad. I remember the name of this station so well because it bore the same name as the owner of the house on State Street, where I had my office when Consul-General in New York, and furthermore because it was there I met with my first and only railway accident. It came about in this way: We reached Spofford Junction at eleven o'clock at night, and the station platform was not lighted. To make sure that my baggage, containing among other treasures my letters of credence, should not go astray, I foolishly went out on the platform to watch the unloading of the baggage. Walking slowly down the pitch-dark platform, I suddenly stepped into space and in falling tried to guess whether I would break my neck or a leg and whether it was to be the right or the left one. I mention this detail to show off the lightning rapidity with which a diplomatically trained brain is apt to work in an emergency. My guesses, however, were wrong, as I came down on a sand-heap head foremost, but as I had instinctively raised my left arm to protect my head, I merely dislocated my left shoulder. This

little misadventure was painful enough, but it afforded me an occasion to experience the kind and active helpfulness which is such an attractive trait of the true American character. I became at once the object of the tenderest care on the part of the whole population of our sleeper. And they were all of the male persuasion too. Everyone wanted to do something for me. My friend Stevens, who had at once telegraphed to Eagle Pass for a surgeon to meet me at the station, put some ice on my shoulder to prevent inflammation setting in before we could reach the frontier station, which was still a couple of hours away. Some one produced a rubber sponge bag, and my shoulder was kept cool and comfortable until we reached Eagle Pass. The surgeon turned out to be the local quarantine inspector, and by profession a "vet." When Stevens asked him whether he knew what to do, he said that he had never had a job like this before, but that he would try. Then he sat down in front of me, stuck my left arm under his armpit, told Stevens to get hold of my hand, and said: "Now I shall count one, two, three, and at the word 'three' you just pull as hard as you can and I'll hook on the blamed thing where it belongs." Then he counted one, two, three, but my tenderhearted friend's pull did not come off as ordered. "Get out," said he, "you're no good; I'll have to do it alone." He kicked off his yellow shoe, stuck his foot under my armpit, gave my arm a pull that would have made me howl with pain if I had not remembered in time that Ministers Plenipotentiary are expected to conceal their feelings, but succeeded in hooking it on somehow. Then he squirted a horse's dose of morphine into my arm which made me feel very happy and contented. The lordly porter of our sleeper secured from his gold-laced superior his gracious consent to the sacrifice of one of the Pullman Company's sheets, my man, the faithful William, produced some nursery pins which my baby's nurse had tucked away in my bag "against an emergency," and some kind of an improvised bandage was duly applied to my arm and shoulder. Stevens suggested that it would be a good thing to get the doctor to accompany me to Mexico, as we still had forty-eight hours of travel before us and anything might happen to my arm. The doctor consented without a moment's hesitation, and



just as he stood there, having been pulled out of his bed in the middle of the night, in his yellow pongee jacket with a big pistol sticking out of his hip pocket, he started for a five days' trip to Mexico and back.

That night I went to sleep with the pious wish that, if ever I should dislocate another shoulder, such accident should happen to me nowhere else but in the United States.

We reached Mexico without any further mishap. But being bandaged up for three weeks at least, I had to await my complete recovery before I could present my letters of credence to the President in due form. At last the day fixed for the ceremony arrived. A high functionary bearing the traditional title of "Introduccion de los Embajadores," came to my hotel to fetch me in a state carriage with a mounted escort. On arrival at the National Palace, an immense three-storied building, where in the courtyard a guard of honour was drawn up, and a band of music which greeted me with the sounds of our national anthem, we alighted at the foot of the monumental main staircase. When we had reached the top of the stairs the functionary who accompanied me suggested that I should take a rest, which I, however, declined, as I thought it would be discourteous to keep the President waiting. But he insisted, saying that the President would be gratified if I accepted his offer for a short rest, whereupon I, not to be outdone in ceremonious courtesy, declared that it was my duty as well as my pleasure to subordinate my personal convenience to the respect due the Chief of the State. After this exchange of courtesies we proceeded to the hall of audience called "El salon de los Embajadores." It was an immense apartment with innumerable windows overlooking the Plaza. On both sides of the hall were posted all the officers of the garrison in full dress uniform and behind them an enormous crowd of people, as on such occasions the doors of the palace are open to everyone who chooses to enter and the advent of a representative of such a legendary far-away country as Russia had attracted an unusually large concourse of the curious. At the farther end of the hall, on a raised dais, stood President Diaz, flanked on both sides by the members of his Cabinet. As we passed the threshold of the hall, we saluted the President with a profound bow, which we had to repeat when we reached the middle of the



hall and a third time just before the raised dais. Each time our bows were returned in the same way by the President and his Ministers. When we reached the dais, the Introducator de los Embajadores stepped aside, my secretary handed me the text of my little speech and I began, in what I considered to be my best oratorical manner : " Monsieur le President." But my breath suddenly failing me, the President smiled encouragingly as if to say : " Never mind, take your time, there's no hurry," whilst I was standing there gaping for breath, which I finally recovered, and rattled off my little speech quite decently. The President read a short speech in reply and then requested me to mount the raised dais, where we sat for some time chatting very pleasantly. He jokingly referred to my difficulty in beginning my speech and explained that he knew that after mounting the steps of the grand stairs I should be out of breath as an effect of the rarefied air at the high altitude of the Mexican table-land. After having been introduced by the President to the other members of his Cabinet I retired, turning around three times in order to execute the three ceremonial bows. I have had the honour of presenting letters of credence to not a few Sovereigns and Chiefs of States, but nowhere else have these functions been accomplished with a ceremonial as elaborate and as impressive as in Mexico.

Soon afterwards I was called home by a cruel bereavement, and having immediately obtained leave of absence I took the train for New York on my way to St. Petersburg. From there, having settled my family affairs, I went to Switzerland to join my wife and child. I found them temporarily established just outside a little village called Chexbres, about half an hour's drive up the mountain from Vevey on the lake of Geneva. I had never before been in Switzerland, and, hailing from a part of Russia where the highest " mountain " was not much higher than about a hundred feet, I fell an easy victim to the charm of such glorious mountain scenery as surrounds the beautiful lake of Geneva. Later we succeeded in finding a charming little villa near Vevey which had been built by and had for many years belonged to a Russian family. This was for the next three years our home. As there was really no business of any kind to be attended to in Mexico, where my mission after all was nothing but a mission of

courtesy, I was able to divide my time between the place of my official residence and our home in Switzerland, and to divide it rather unevenly, spending most of it with my family. However, by Christmas 1891 I was obliged to tear myself away with the intention of spending a whole year at my post. It was a very sad Christmas, and a very sad parting indeed. But there was no help for it. We had arranged a little private code which would enable us to exchange weekly cablegrams in cipher, and to assure each other that we were still alive and well and yearning to be together again and so forth. All this was expressed in two words, "Alma semper," at fifty cents a word. The weekly receipt by me of cables containing merely these two words after a while attracted the attention of the staff of the cable company's office, who ended by guessing the meaning of these sacramental words; the messenger who had to bring me the usual weekly cable would always present himself with a broad grin and express the hope that the "senora" was quite well.

My life would have been a lonely one if I had not had the good fortune to strike up a warm friendship with a most charming Englishman, the head of an old established Anglo-Mexican firm, which for years had been the leading banking house in the country. He was closely related to the most prominent aristocratic families in Mexico, and was the most popular man in town, everybody calling him Uncle William—*tio Guillermo*—in the familiar Spanish way. Thanks to him and to his charming daughter, this year of separation from my beloved ones was made less hard to bear. Our little circle was joined later by an old friend and colleague of mine, the newly appointed British Minister, Mr. Le Poer Trench. We used to meet every day and to share all such pleasures as were to be had in Mexico, and thanks to "Uncle William" I was brought into contact with many of the prominent men in politics and business.

In the winter of 1892, I was enabled to leave Mexico for good, having, through the gracious favour of the Emperor Alexander III, in consideration of my domestic circumstances, been granted an unlimited leave of absence.

## CHAPTER XI

Departure for Europe—Under Pagenstecher at Wiesbaden—Death of Alexander III—Its impression in Russia and abroad—Accession of Nicholas II—His marriage—An unfortunate speech—I am presented to the Emperor—The Empress.

WHEN I was taking my final leave of President Diaz, in June 1893, he was in the full enjoyment of his mental and physical vigour in spite of his seventy years of age, which seemed to sit lightly on him and had not in the least impaired his energy and activity. It was the heyday of his success as a ruler. Law and order reigned everywhere and seemed to be at last secured on a firm, unshakable basis; railroads and canals were being built, commerce and industry were flourishing, finances were in perfect order, the credit of the country was fully redeemed, Mexican Government Bonds were quoted at their nominal price on foreign exchanges, confidence in this country's future had returned or rather had been established; in short, the country had never before known such an era of internal peace and prosperity as under the rule of President Diaz.

Little did I dream then, that ten years later I would meet again Don Porfirio Diaz on the sands of Biarritz, leaning on the arm of the noble and devoted partner of his life, a broken-down old man, a fugitive from the country of whose greatness and prosperity he had been the creator, and which ever since his fall from power has been agonizing in the grip of civil war and anarchy.

But his name will go down in history as that of one of the greatest constructive statesmen of the nineteenth century.

A no less pathetic spectacle is presented by the people who requited with such black ingratitude the priceless services of the great ruler and creator of the country's prosperity;

the people who, ever since, have been wallowing in the mire of hopeless anarchy because they were not ripe for assimilating principles and institutions such as have made a neighbouring nation great and prosperous beyond the most ambitious dreams of the founders of her commonwealth.

Shortly before leaving Mexico I lost, temporarily, the sight of one of my eyes through an inflammation of the choroid membrane, and the Mexican oculists advised me to place myself, as soon as possible, under treatment of the celebrated oculist Professor Pagenstecher at Wiesbaden. I lost no time in following this advice and sailed from New York on the first steamer on which I could secure a state-room, not an easy matter, by the way, as it was the time of the summer exodus of American travellers in search of the delights of the Old World.

When I arrived in Wiesbaden I found my family, who had come from Vevey to meet me, already comfortably established in a pleasant hotel overlooking the park. They were horrified at my appearance with smoked glasses and a green shade, which, by the way, Professor Pagenstecher made me discard as soon as I entered his room. The same evening I became an inmate of his clinic. I found that all my fellow patients were English and each and every one of them, to my great astonishment, smoked either a cigar or a pipe. This sight cheered me up considerably as I had given up smoking under the mistaken belief that this sacrifice was required of me in the interest of the cure. The next morning the Professor undeceived me in this regard, assuring me that abstention from smoking was necessary only after an operation. I asked him how it was that, except myself, he had only English patients and not a single German in his clinic. He laughingly said that, ever after having been sent for to Windsor by the Queen for some eye trouble, English people in great numbers came to his clinic, but Germans prefer to go to London for treatment by English oculists. Another case of *Nemo propheta in patria sua*. After having undergone the prescribed treatment in the morning I was allowed to go out and spend the rest of the day with my family. In this way I made the acquaintance of the well-known Herr von Brandt, formerly German Minister to Japan and China. The Chinese-Japanese War had just begun, and I was greatly



interested in discussing this event with a man who had the reputation of being the greatest authority in Germany on Far Eastern affairs, having represented his country for a great many years, first in one and then in the other of the countries at war. To my great astonishment he turned out to be a firm believer in the victory of China; in fact, he seemed to think that it was madness on the part of the Japanese to attempt an invasion of China, where they would be simply swallowed up in the immense mass of the teeming millions of the Chinese people. Never having been in China myself I was not in a position to controvert his assertions as to the superiority of the Chinese—a point of view, by the way, shared by the majority of foreigners in the Far East—but I told him that from what I had been able to observe personally, during my sojourn in Japan, I had the very highest opinion of the military efficiency and the warlike spirit of the Japanese, and that I was rather inclined to share the belief of the celebrated Russian explorer of China, Colonel Prjevalsky, that a brigade of first-class troops like theirs could go all through China like a hot knife through butter.

One day, in the course of my saunterings through the streets of Wiesbaden, I noticed in one of the numerous bookshops a little volume entitled *Caligula oder der Cæsaren Wahnsinn*—"Caligula or Cæsarean madness," would be a sufficiently exact translation—and attracted by the singularity of this title I went into the shop and purchased the book. It turned out to be a literal translation of various picked texts from Latin authors of the period, original texts always being carefully cited, but chosen so skilfully as to produce the effect of manifestly intentional *lèse-majesté*, at the same time, however, furnishing no legal ground for a possible criminal prosecution. I was told that the sale of this little book had, within a few weeks, reached an enormous figure, some hundreds of thousands of copies, people said. But when the authorities bethought themselves of the necessity of doing something in the matter, it was found that, although the booklet was evidently a lampoon of a most subversive character, no criminal intent could be proven such as might have rendered possible the prosecution of the author—quite a well-known professor, I believe—a point of view which was said to have been laughingly endorsed by the sufferer

himself. However, the extraordinary success of the booklet might have been considered a straw, showing which way the popular wind was beginning to blow.

The cure I underwent in Professor Pagenstecher's clinic was completely successful. I not only recovered the sight of my injured eye, but have ever since, and to this hour, been able to read the finest print without the aid of glasses.

Soon after our return to Vevey the newspapers began, at first in guarded language, to bring disquieting news in regard to the health of the Emperor Alexander III, followed by the usual official denials. It was said that the Emperor was suffering from a slight indisposition, that he had not even been compelled to take to his bed, that all the time he had been attending to affairs of State as usual, and his health was improving and so forth. But then came the announcement that the Imperial family were going to winter at Livadia on the south coast of the Crimea. All these news were not in themselves very alarming as, after all, they related to the state of the health of a man not yet past middle age, gifted with the frame and the strength of a giant, whom one might suppose well able to resist the attack of any disease not out of the common. Nevertheless they produced a disquieting effect abroad quite out of proportion with the apparent gravity of the case. The Emperor had come to be considered, by all Europe, as the mainstay of peace, the one immovable barrier against any attempt at disturbing the peace of Europe, whose disappearance might be the signal for the opening of the floodgates of a general war. It was not, however, due solely to the sterling worth of the Emperor's personal character that his personality had come to be considered as the keystone of European peace. There were present deeper lying causes having their roots in the historical development and the conditions of the political life of Europe.

The beginning of the nineteenth century saw the establishment of the practical overlordships of France, under Napoleon, over the whole of Continental Europe with the sole exception of Russia. For a time Napoleon was content to share the hegemony over Europe with his great rival, Alexander I of Russia. The alliance between the two Emperors, short-lived as it was, rendered possible the acquisition by Russia

of Bessarabia and the conquest of Finland, but nevertheless ended in a rupture and in the invasion of Russia by Napoleon. After his disastrous retreat from Moscow which marked the beginning of his downfall, all the European Powers under the leadership of Russia and England united in a campaign against him which ended in the invasion of France, the capture of Paris and the exile of Napoleon. At the Congress of Vienna, which undertook the settlement of the affairs of Europe, Alexander I played a leading part, although even then a secret agreement, inimical to him in principle, had been reached between conquered France and victorious England and Austria. This apparent leadership passed, after his death; to his brother and successor, Nicholas I, and ultimately led to the formation against Russia of a coalition of the Western Powers with the addition of Sardinia and Turkey. After the defeat of Russia in the Crimean War the leadership of Continental Europe passed again to France under Napoleon III. The reluctance of France to tolerate the unification of Germany under the leadership of Prussia led to the Franco-Prussian War, which resulted in the defeat of France and the annexation by Germany of Alsace-Lorraine. The war had practically been a duel between these two Powers. But the victory could not have been so easily won but for the attitude taken up by Russia in retaliation for Austria's unfriendly behaviour during the Crimean War, which prevented any possible attempt on the part of Austria to seek, in an alliance with France, a revenge for her defeat by Prussia in 1866; and likewise for the implied rather friendly neutrality of Great Britain, whose traditional policy, ever since the days of Louis XIV and William III, had always consisted in siding, openly or tacitly, against any Power actually holding, or aiming at, the hegemony of Continental Europe. But, by the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, Germany had laid the foundation of a future conflict, for revenge and the reconquest by France of her lost provinces, the outbreak of which was bound to be only a question of time and opportunity. Since the advent of William II, Germany had, by her provocative diplomacy, by the declamatory megalomania of her War Lord, aroused suspicions in regard to her ultimate designs, which alarmed even those Powers who were least indisposed toward her. It was



owing to the injection into European politics of this new disturbing element that the atmosphere of peaceful rest, which had pervaded the last decade, and had even given rise to vague hopes of the possibility of a gradual extinction of international animosities, began to give way to an uneasy feeling of insecurity characteristic of a state of unstable equilibrium. On the background of this troubled condition of the European public mind the powerful personality of Alexander III had begun to assume the traits of a guardian angel of peace. The potential power of Russia, which had not yet been put to the test, loomed very large indeed, overshadowing the situation, since without the consent or connivance of Russia no Continental Power could possibly attempt the adventure of war. And this immense power, for good or evil, was concentrated absolutely in the hands of one man, an autocrat Sovereign who had given proof to the world of his abhorrence of war, of his straightforward honesty of purpose and his immovable will. Small wonder it was that the news of his serious illness spread alarm all over the world. When the news from Livadia had foreshadowed the approach of the end, the Emperor's brother and sister-in-law, the Prince and Princess of Wales hastened to the bedside of the dying Sovereign. Europe was holding her breath in hourly expectation of the dread event. When the fatal hour had struck, it cast a gloom replete with dark forebodings for the future of the world's peace. The balance of power in Europe had passed into the inexperienced hands of a slender youth of whom the world only knew that he had been a retiring, modest and dutiful son, and whose enigmatic personality was a riddle the future only could solve.

In Russia the impression of the fatal event was overpowering. It was felt by the nation as a cruel bereavement such as an orphaned family of children would feel at the loss of a father who had been their only support, their secure shelter and their hopeful promise of future welfare and happiness. I doubt whether there could have been at that moment in Russia a single thoughtful patriot, however much and however rightly opposed to the late Sovereign's reactionary domestic policy, who did not instinctively feel that the country was left to face an uncertain future full of sinister forebodings.



Shortly before the Emperor's death had taken place the betrothal of the heir to the throne, the future Nicholas II, to the Princess Alix of Hesse, destined to be thrown from the most magnificent throne in Christendom into abject misery, and to share with her devotedly loved husband and martyred children, the most horrible fate.

The defunct Emperor's body was transported from the Crimea to St. Petersburg by rail, in a funeral car converted into a mortuary chapel in which prayers for the repose of the soul of the departed were said three times a day in the presence of the Imperial family and their English relatives. All the way from the extreme south of the country to the northern capital the peasantry in hundreds of thousands flocked to the railway line, and kneeling, rendered a last homage to their beloved Sovereign. King Edward VII, who as Prince of Wales accompanied the body of his late brother-in-law on his last journey, must have kept a vivid recollection of these touching demonstrations.

The funeral of the late Emperor took place at St. Petersburg in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the cathedral where repose the remains of all the members of the Romanoff dynasty since Peter the Great. The correspondent of an English newspaper who witnessed the ceremony mentioned the appearance of the young Sovereign in the following words, which for some inexplicable reason have stuck obstinately to my memory: "and immediately following the funeral car walked, with bowed head, the 'poor little Emperor.'" The correspondent was apparently struck by the contrast between the slender figure of the Emperor and the burly form of the Prince of Wales who walked by the side of his Imperial nephew. I never could forget these words "poor little Emperor," perhaps by subconscious premonition of the cruel fate in store for him.

Shortly afterwards the marriage of the Imperial couple was celebrated in the chapel of the Winter Palace with the accustomed state and magnificence. The young Sovereigns, on their way from the Winter Palace along the Nevsky Prospect to the Empress Dowager's palace where they had taken up their temporary residence, were frantically acclaimed by hundreds of thousands of people who crowded the immense Palace Square and the stately main thoroughfare of the

capital. In the first days of the new reign the enthusiasm was unbounded and shared by all classes of the population. It seemed to be the dawn of a new and happier era. But this enthusiasm and all these rosy expectations were fated to receive, very soon, a fatal setback from which the young Emperor's erstwhile popularity never recovered.

It happened thus : according to custom, deputations from all parts of the country had come to the capital to do homage to the new Sovereigns with loyal addresses and presentations of the customary bread and salt, some on gold or silver plates as well as some on plain wooden ones. The zemstvo of the province of Tver had always been known as composed of a particularly liberal membership and was consequently regarded with some suspicion and disfavour by the ruling bureaucracy. On this occasion they had come armed with a loyal address in which they had ventured to allude to the desirability of widening the limits of self-government as granted to the local institutions, in short of something in the shape of a most modestly limited, but still "constitutional" reform. The text of this address seems to have been considered by the authorities as something little short of revolutionary. At any rate the young Sovereign was made, in his address to the deputations which crowded the concert hall of the Winter Palace, to warn his people against entertaining "senseless dreams," and to declare that he would faithfully and firmly uphold the autocratic regime inherited from his forefathers. The authorship of the Emperor's speech was attributed by some to the Minister of the Interior and by others to the Procurator of the Holy Synod, the notorious fanatic and reactionary Pobiedonostzeff. I had arrived in St. Petersburg a few days before and at the hour when the reception of the deputations was taking place in the Winter Palace I was visiting an old friend—who, it is rumoured, has not long ago met, as so many others, a horrible fate at the hands of the peasants on her estate—the wife of the last descendant of a prominent and wealthy princely house, when her husband returned from the palace, and with burning indignation related that not only the Emperor's speech had been greeted with a thunderous volley of loyal "hurrahs," but that part of the deputations had repaired to the cathedral to hold a thanksgiving service to celebrate

the event. This spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm was certainly largely due to a generous feeling of loyalty toward a Sovereign so young and inexperienced on whose shoulders had fallen the crushing burden of responsibility for the destiny of an Empire. Moreover, there was a large and influential class of people whose sincere belief in the necessity of an autocratic regime had been considerably strengthened by the unquestionable success of the late Emperor's reign, and who would naturally acclaim the new Sovereign's declaration as a happy omen for the future. And then also the threatening language of a stern autocrat harmonized so little with the young Emperor's gentle appearance and modest bearing, that its purport and meaning was perhaps hardly realized at the moment. But it was not long before the application of the contemptuous expression "senseless dreams" to the hopes and wishes entertained by earnest men and loyal patriots began to be felt as a deliberate insult offered to the majority of the educated classes, without whose co-operation and support no government could be successfully conducted. An irreparable blow had been dealt at the young Sovereign's popularity in the very beginning of his reign.

A few days later I had the honour of being presented to the Emperor, whom I had met only once before as a little boy in a sailor's blue jacket when he rushed into the ante-room where I was waiting to be received by His Majesty, and laughingly asked the A.D.C. on duty whether he could tell him when "papa" would at last get rid of his guests. The presentation took place in the Empress Dowager's palace, known as the "Anitchkoff Palace." We were some twenty people commanded for presentation to the Emperor on that day, and we were shown into a large hall leading to the Empress Dowager's private drawing-room. After awhile the A.D.C. on duty, who happened to be one of the Grand Dukes, appeared and requested us to form in a line; he placed me at the head of the line as the ranking personage present, and told me that the Emperor would come up to me first and engage me in conversation.

Then the Grand Duke returned to the drawing-room, the folding doors of which were thrown open by the traditional coloured door-keepers in fantastic Oriental costume, and the young Emperor appeared on the threshold in the undress



uniform of a colonel of the guards, a graceful, slender figure of supreme distinction and elegance, followed by the towering form of his Imperial cousin the A.D.C. on duty. His Majesty advanced smiling across the large room, came up to me, shook hands with me most graciously and at once began asking me all sorts of questions about Mexico, showing an astonishing acquaintance with things Mexican, and even putting me to some embarrassment by inquiries about the state of the negotiations between Mexico and Guatemala in regard to some frontier dispute between these two countries. This was one of the first receptions he had held since his accession to the throne, and he had evidently been carefully reading up for the occasion. But in later years whenever I had occasion to approach the Emperor I was always struck by the astonishing amount of detailed information on every subject he seemed to possess and his faithful recollection of even quite insignificant circumstances. He had a most retentive memory, and possessed in a supreme degree the art of agreeing with his interlocutor in such a way as to make him believe that he had been much impressed and quite convinced by what he had been told—a most delicate kind of flattery.

Before leaving St. Petersburg to return to Switzerland I had the honour of a presentation to the young Empress Alexandra, as she had been rechristened upon joining the Orthodox Greek Church. The new Sovereigns had temporarily taken up their quarters in the Empress Dowager's palace, where the Emperor, as heir to the throne, had been occupying a bachelor apartment on the ground floor consisting of a small reception-room, an equally small study, a bedroom and a bathroom. It was in this apartment that we were received—two high functionaries and myself—one after the other. While I was waiting in the reception-room for my predecessor to emerge from the study where he was having his audience with Her Majesty, I heard the sentinel on guard in the corridor shouting the customary salute: "Good health to Your Majesty!" Answering my astonished look, the A.D.C. on duty, who was keeping me company, said: "You need not think the Emperor will come in here, he is going to the bedroom; he has no other place where to wait whilst the Empress is receiving presentations—unless he should prefer



to sit in the bath-room." Such were the more than modest surroundings in which a great Sovereign and his bride, owners of some of the most magnificent palaces in the world, were passing the first months of their reign.

When I was shown into the little study, among the furniture of which two moderate-sized writing-desks placed side by side—one His Majesty's, the other Her Majesty's—seemed somewhat to overcrowd the room, I found myself in the presence of the young Empress, tall, strikingly handsome, extending her hand to be kissed with a trying-to-be-gracious smile struggling against a natural expression of haughty pride. She addressed me in French, not having yet acquired a sufficient mastery of Russian, in that international French, correct and fluent, but not idiomatic, which is the common language of the great world everywhere in Continental Europe. Knowing her to be half English, and that English was the language mostly used in the Imperial family circle, I committed the breach of etiquette of attempting to pilot the conversation into an English channel. This well-meant attempt was, however, instantly met with a frown and a pointed reply in French, as much as to make me feel that it was an undue presumption on my part. The impression I carried away was that the Empress with all her striking beauty and dignity possessed none of that winning manner and kindly graciousness springing from the heart that had gained for her mother-in-law, the Empress Dowager, the devoted affection of all those who had the good fortune to approach her and the widest popularity among all classes of the people, and perhaps preserved her from the worst indignity in the hour of trial when the barbarian hordes of Bolshevism invaded the Crimea, where she had sought safety, and even the very palace where she was residing.

## CHAPTER XII

Death of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. de Giers—Question of his successor—Mr. de Staal—Prince Lobanoff-Rostovsky appointed—His character—Interview with him and subsequent appointment as Minister to Serbia.

SOON after my return to Switzerland I learned of the death of Mr. de Giers, who had been the Emperor Alexander III's Minister of Foreign Affairs during all the thirteen years of his reign, and I determined to go to St. Petersburg as soon as his successor had been appointed and try to get transferred to a new post instead of having to return to Mexico. The choice of a successor to Mr. de Giers must have been a matter of considerable embarrassment to the young Sovereign, as he had never come into contact with the personnel of our diplomacy, and he had no basis upon which he could exercise his personal judgment. Public opinion seemed to favour the candidacy of our Ambassador in Vienna, Prince Lobanoff-Rostovsky. But for some reason he had not been in favour with the late Emperor, and it was natural for the son to hesitate about beginning his reign by the appointment to this most important post of a man whom he knew would not have been his father's choice. Negotiations were, therefore, begun with the Ambassador in London, Mr. de Staal, who was next in rank to the Prince in our service. He was a most distinguished diplomat of the old school, a level-headed prudent statesman, utterly opposed to any kind of adventurous foreign policy and a firm believer in the advantage for both Russia and Great Britain of renouncing the policy of mutual distrust in favour of a frank and friendly understanding. These views had been inspiring Mr. de Staal's activity during his long residence in London as Ambassador

to Great Britain. His honesty, his high character and winning personality had earned him not only the confidence and regard of the Court and of English statesmen of all parties, but also warm sympathies in the widest circles of English society. His appointment to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would undoubtedly have been welcomed as a guarantee that the direction of Russia's foreign policy would be exercised, as heretofore, in support of the cause of European peace. But Mr. de Staal, having long passed the age of threescore and ten, did not feel equal to undertaking the labour and responsibility of such an important office, and requested to be excused from taking upon himself a mission to which he might no longer be able to do justice. Maybe another reason for his reluctance was the apprehension lest the appointment of another Minister of Foreign Affairs bearing a German name might adversely affect the popularity of the young Sovereign with the Pan-Slavists and extreme nationalists, whose growing influence on public opinion since the days of the fraternization of the French and Russian fleets at Toulon and Kronstadt had to be considered. Be that as it may, Mr. de Staal's refusal having become final, Prince Lobanoff-Rostovsky was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Prince belonged to one of the families of the highest nobility, direct descendants of Rurik, the Varanguian founder of the Russian State in the ninth century. He was a man of great personal distinction, of very aristocratic, perhaps slightly supercilious, bearing and of great social and political prestige, having occupied the post of Ambassador in Vienna for some sixteen years after several years' service in the same capacity in Constantinople and London. He possessed a mind less profound than subtle but highly cultured, a ready wit, a shrewd judgment of human character and an extended knowledge of political affairs of the past, having always been deeply interested in historical research. Among his shortcomings, of which no man ever is entirely free, I would mention a disposition to look upon things with a little too much calm philosophy, as if they really did not matter, and then a certain intellectual pride which made him reluctant to seek expert advice in matters in regard to which he could not be expected to

possess either sufficient knowledge or experience. This latter trait of his character rendered him a very poor service when, in the very beginning of his Ministry, he had to make a momentous decision regarding the policy to be adopted in the presence of the grave situation created in the Far East by the outcome of the war between China and Japan. But this is a question which I must reserve for another chapter relating to the time when, as Minister to Japan, I was called upon to deal with the consequences of that policy.

A week or so later I went to the Foreign Office to present myself to my new chief, whom I had never met before. He received me very courteously, but I felt at once that he would prefer not to be bothered with a prolonged interview, and I confined myself to telling him in a very few words the reason why I wished to be transferred from Mexico to some other post. He replied just as briefly that he would keep in mind what I had told him and would let me know his decision later. "Do you wish me," said I, "to await your decision here in St. Petersburg?" "By no means," was the reply; "there are posts and telegraphs and you can be reached in Switzerland just as well as here." That was all the conversation that passed between us, but somehow I felt that, my fate being in the hands of this man of few words, I need not worry and everything would turn out for the best. Indeed, the same evening the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs told me that Prince Lobanoff had me in view for the post of Minister to Serbia. I took the next train for Switzerland reflecting that not only was the post of Minister to Serbia not vacant, but that most probably nothing would come of the plan, for the same reason which had prevented my being sent to Bulgaria ten years before. But I felt sure that I need not worry about returning to Mexico and being once more obliged to separate from my family for an indefinite time.

And so our quiet life on the shore of the lake of Geneva went on for several months, undisturbed by any cares or thoughts about the future until one morning, picking up a Russian newspaper, I noticed to my utter amazement a decree, reprinted from the *Government Messenger*, by which I was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Pleni-



potentiary to Serbia. This was certainly, to say the least, an unusual way for a man to be apprised of his appointment to a post after all not so very unimportant.

When I reached St. Petersburg a week later I learned from an old friend of mine that when, on the day my appointment had been signed by the Emperor, Prince Lobanoff, knowing his friendship for me, had told him of it, he had mentioned incidentally his intention to communicate this good news to me by telegraph, the Prince had laughingly said, "What's the use? He will find out soon enough from the newspapers." I mention this merely as characteristic of the rather casual way Prince Lobanoff had of treating matters not always of such a comparatively unimportant nature as the appointment of a subordinate to a new post.

I have already mentioned that I never had met Prince Lobanoff before our first brief interview. All I knew about his political views I knew only from hearsay, and it was, in a few words, about as follows: that he was in favour of a coalition between Russia, Austria and France; that although he had been for some time Ambassador in London, he was not inclined to favour a political *rapprochement* with Great Britain; that for some reason he had conceived a very strong personal dislike for the Emperor William, so much so that when, shortly before his appointment to the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs, he had been gazetted Ambassador to Germany, he not only never went to Berlin, but even neglected to ask for an audience with the Emperor William when the latter had come to Vienna on a visit to the Emperor Francis Joseph; and lastly, that he was strongly in favour of a friendly understanding with Austria-Hungary in regard to Near Eastern affairs, and therefore much opposed to the traditional political activity of our diplomacy in the Balkan Peninsula.

I do not intend to convey the idea that this activity of our diplomacy meant the carrying out by our local representatives of a definite hard-and-fast policy deliberately planned by the central authority. Such impression, generally current abroad, contributed not a little towards creating that atmosphere of mistrust with which Russia's foreign

policy was regarded. As a matter of fact, however, this impression corresponded only partially to the reality of things.

In this connection—and I apologize for a new interruption of my narrative—I take issue with Dr. E. J. Dillon, unquestionably the greatest foreign authority on things Russian, when in his remarkable book *The Eclipse of Russia* he lays at the door of what he calls “ Tsarism ” most of the blame for what he so justly stigmatizes as the “ predatory tendencies ” of Russia’s foreign policy. Without wishing to exonerate from all guilt in this respect the late unfortunate Emperor, although much is accountable to his inexperience and weakness of will, I think that the real source of the evil should be looked for not so much in “ Tsarism ”—if that expression is intended to describe a regime implying the direct action of the autocratic power of the Sovereign the actual exercise of which has, however, since the reign of Alexander II, gradually passed into the hands of the all-powerful bureaucracy—but rather in the defective organization of the Government. Dr. Dillon himself, characterizing the Government of Russia at its best, describes it as “ composed of public servants of His Majesty the Tsar, each of whom conscientiously strives to further what he deems to be the interests of his Imperial master in the way which he considers most efficacious and without reference to the views, aims or obligations of his colleagues.” This description is not only perfectly true, but it also applies to the subordinate branches in the various departments of the Government and sometimes to its diplomatic representatives in foreign parts as well. If one adds to this the innate, somewhat anarchistic, tendencies of the national mentality, generally rather refractory to the idea of discipline, one easily realizes how difficult it may be for a Minister of Foreign Affairs to keep his agents abroad under proper control and to prevent their striking out lines of policy of their own, sometimes even in direct opposition to the policy of the central authority.

I hope the reader will pardon this lengthy digression. It was necessary in order to explain the reason why the new Minister of Foreign Affairs saw fit to make a radical change in our diplomatic representation in Serbia and also

to shed some light on the difficulties I had to contend with in my new post.

As a matter of fact Prince Lobanoff's predecessor in office, Mr. de Giers, had always been just as averse as himself to our perennial interference in political affairs in the Slav States of the Balkan Peninsula, which thereby kept up a state of latent antagonism between Russia and the Dual Monarchy. This interference in the affairs of the Balkan States was, however, favoured for reasons of its own by the General Staff and patronized by the slavophile and ultra-nationalist Press, and de Giers was not strong enough to resist them, and was perhaps too good-natured to deal severely with subordinates whom ambition prompted to rely on powerful outside backing rather than on the approval of their chief.

The difficulty of dealing with the tendency of ambitious subordinate agents to indulge in playing politics on independent lines suggested to one of the oldest and most experienced councillors of our Foreign Department the following cynical reflection: "If one has the misfortune to have an agent who considers himself very able, or, which is perhaps still more dangerous, who really is very able, there is only one way of rendering him innocuous and that is by giving him in the very beginning of his career all the 'decorations,' from the highest down to the lowest, and to withdraw them, one after another, after each diplomatic success achieved by him."

The Balkan Peninsula was the powder magazine of Europe because the militant diplomacy of the Great Powers had, for generations, made it the battlefield for fighting out their rivalries in the struggle for power and influence. As a Serbian statesman once said to me: "If only the Great Powers would agree to leave us severely alone, we Balkan peoples would soon manage among ourselves to settle our affairs to our own satisfaction, and it would be better not only for us but for the peace of Europe as well." That was precisely how Prince Lobanoff regarded the situation in the Balkan States of Slav nationality. In each of them there were political parties which relied on the support, one of Russian and the other of Austro-Hungarian diplomacy. This state of affairs was apt to lead, if not always



to friction, at least to latent antagonism between the two monarchies which in the end might prove a serious danger to the peace of Europe. Prince Lobanoff was determined to break with the old system of favouring one or the other of the political parties in these countries. He therefore resolved to recall our Minister to Serbia, whom he considered to have been too closely wedded to the old system, and to appoint some one whom he could trust to steer the ship in the new course.

The mission entrusted to me was a very unpopular one and was sure to encounter underhand opposition on the part of powerful influences, but I could undertake it unhesitatingly, both because I was in thorough sympathy with its object, and because I felt that I could implicitly rely on the Prince's loyal support. He was a man of few words and no stickler for formalities, and being satisfied that I was ready to fall in entirely with his views, he sent me off to my new post without the usual written instructions and with only one laconic direction: "Do not walk in the footsteps of your predecessor."

However, on reaching Belgrade and having acquainted myself thoroughly with the state of affairs there, I drew up a memorandum of my coming activity in Serbia in accordance with the views of Prince Lobanoff, which I requested him to submit to the Emperor for confirmation. This was done, and stood me in very good stead in the sequel when, after Prince Lobanoff's death, I had to confer with the Chief of the Grand General Staff, General Obrontcheff, on the necessity of eliminating the underhand opposition to the policy I was pursuing in Serbia in obedience to my instructions, which I encountered from our military agent, Colonel Baron Taube, a very distinguished and ambitious officer who later in life as Ataman of the Don Cossacks and Governor-General of their vast territory was said to have greatly distinguished himself as an able administrator. This document enabled me to prove to the General that the policy which had encountered the opposition of his subordinate was not a device of my own and was based on very serious considerations. It turned out that he had not been aware of the change of policy determined upon by the defunct Minister of Foreign Affairs,



and he at once agreed with me that it was inadmissible that two diametrically opposite lines of policy should be pursued by two authorized representatives of the same Government. This incident furnishes another illustration of the chief defect of the organization of the Government under the late regime—the absence of unity of plan and action, as between the different departments of the Government. This defect becomes a very serious danger when the military department is not subordinate to the civil power, but assumes the part of an independent branch of the Government, entitled to have a policy of its own and to pursue it in foreign countries through its own regularly accredited agents. For it must not be forgotten that the systematic development, during the latter part of the last century, of the military organizations of the Continental Powers of Europe, with their “Grand General Staffs” with pigeon-holes full of elaborate plans for the invasion of their neighbours’ dominions, constituting themselves a standing menace to the world’s peace. But when, in a country like Germany, the military caste had come, not only to control the government of the State, but also to implant their mentality in the minds of an influential body of the so-called “intellectuals,” this danger was increased a hundredfold and was bound—unless counteracted in time—to end in the world catastrophe which is upon us now.

These reflections had presented themselves to me when I first came in contact with a situation where I had to encounter, in the execution of my instructions, the underhand opposition of my military colleague, who had been working for years hand in glove with my predecessor actively supporting one of the political parties in Serbia supposed to be devoted to Russian interests, a policy favoured by the Grand General Staff but with which Prince Lobanoff was determined to break.

## CHAPTER XIII

Political "Parties" in Serbia—Arrival at Belgrade—King Alexander—His appearance and character—Fatherly advice—Secret treaty with Austria—Queen Nathalie—Political conditions in Serbia—Pan-Slavists—Macedonia.

AT this time there were in Serbia three political parties engaged in the struggle for power: the Radical Party, embracing most of the peasantry, and therefore numerically the strongest; the so-called Progressive Party, to which belonged perhaps the largest part of the "Intelligentzia"; and lastly the so-called "Liberal Party," the least numerous of the three. The question of "Liberalism" or "Radicalism" had not much to do with establishing the dividing lines between these parties. Their programmes, as far as they concerned domestic policies did not vary very greatly, which was but natural in the absence of conflicting class interests, considering that the bulk of the population of Serbia is composed of peasant farmers, the great majority of whom are cultivating their own lands. Serbia is a land without any aristocracy and without any middle class, the place of the latter being taken by the army of officials and placemen out of office, who are mainly recruited from the peasantry—in a word, a land of prevailing social equality. Therefore, in the struggle for power the parties were seeking outside support, from either Austria-Hungary or Russia, both these Powers being interested in Serbia, the former as the nearest neighbour, and the latter on the ground of racial and religious affinity, both struggling for domination in the Balkan Peninsula. Playing upon the mutual distrust and jealousy between them had accordingly become the favourite game of party leaders in Serbia, just as it had been the case in Bulgaria before Alexander III caused Russian diplomacy to withdraw from the contest there. In playing their hands in this game Serbian party leaders were aided by the gullibility and petty ambition of Russian and Austro-

Hungarian representatives—the former chanting victory whenever a Radical Ministry succeeded in grasping power, and the latter when the Progressives overcame their Radical rivals, the Radicals being supposed to owe allegiance to Russia as the great mother of all Slavdom, and the Progressives being considered willing instruments in the hands of the Austro-Hungarian policy in the Balkans. These intrigues centred naturally around the young King and the two leading Legations, keeping the little political world of Belgrade in a state of constant turmoil and at the same time feeding the latent antagonism between the two Great Powers.

This was the state of affairs to which Lobanoff had determined to put an end, and he had entrusted me with the task of carrying through his policy.

It so happened that a couple of days before my arrival at Belgrade, the King had dismissed the Radical Ministry and had called upon the leader of the Progressive Party, Mr. Novakovitch, to form a new Cabinet. From the traditional point of view prevalent in Pan-Slavist circles, this event was to be considered as a slap in the face of our diplomacy, and would probably be attributed to the appointment of a mere outsider, quite unfamiliar with Balkan politics, to such an important post. The King himself was apparently not quite free in his mind from misgivings in this respect. At any rate he sent for me the very next day after I had presented my letters of credence, and in the course of a private and very cordial interview he incidentally mentioned, in a more or less apologetic tone, that he had been compelled to part with the Ministry I probably expected to find in power, and to entrust Mr. Novakovitch with the formation of a Progressive Cabinet. Under my instructions I was able to tell him that Russia's warmest friendship and sympathy were assured to him and to his people whichever party he chose to place in power, and that we were sure that all Serbians, to whichever party they belonged, would reciprocate these feelings.

I am bound to say that I have never had any cause whatever to regret that from the very beginning of my short career as Minister to Serbia I had to deal with a Ministry of the Progressive Party which was supposed to be hostile to Russia and devoted to Austro-Hungarian interests. Nothing could have exceeded the frank cordiality and confidence



shown to me by Mr. Novakovitch, during the time of our official connection. As to his supposed Austrophilism, I can only say that he was just as averse to playing off Russia against Austria-Hungary in Serbia, as he condemned the playing-off of Austria-Hungary against Russia in Bulgaria ; in a word, he was just as apprehensive of the danger of this diplomatic game as was Prince Lobanoff and as I was myself. For the rest he was convinced that the true interests of Serbia demanded maintenance of the closest friendly relations with the neighbouring Dual Monarchy, without, of course, the faintest trace of hostility towards Russia. There was certainly nothing in this attitude, entirely justifiable and patriotic from a Serbian point of view, to which we could take exception, barring our Pan-Slavists, who were even then dreaming of the war which was to seal the ruin and destruction of our unfortunate country.

As for the young King, he gave me, a few months after my arrival, a proof of his goodwill and confidence, than which nothing could have been more complete and convincing. But to this I shall revert later on.

I shall now try to present to my readers a word-picture of the unhappy young monarch whose short life was fated to come to such a tragic end.

When I arrived at Belgrade he was a youth of nineteen, looking much older than his age, not at all of prepossessing appearance, afflicted with extreme shortsightedness, rather awkwardly built, and awkward in all his movements. As to his intellect, character and disposition, opinions were divided. Two years before, when a mere boy of seventeen, he had executed a veritable *coup d'état* with considerable skill and resolution, had dismissed the Regency, which had been established after his father's, King Milan's, abdication in 1889, had proclaimed himself of age and formed his first Ministry. Whatever the defects of his character and disposition may have been, much was due to the unfortunate conditions in which his childhood and early youth had been spent. Between family dissensions, divorce proceedings of his parents, finally made King as a boy of thirteen, and abandoned to the care of strangers, he had grown up in circumstances and amid surroundings that could not but have embittered his soul.



I must own that, although my first impression was not a favourable one, I somehow felt drawn towards him by a feeling of pity for one so young and friendless, surrounded by self-seeking, intriguing politicians, called upon to rule a turbulent people at an age when other boys had no cares but sport and happy comradeship. I felt that what he needed above all was frank and disinterested kindness. Fortunately, in my official position, and being so much the older man, it was possible for me to adopt with propriety, in my relations with him, a tone at once of respect, due to his sovereign rank, and of simply human fatherly kindness.

One afternoon when out walking in the main street of the capital I met the King, walking like myself, followed by two orderly officers in uniform. He stopped me to exchange a few words with me and my little daughter, and I was, I confess, rather shocked at his appearance, as it was the first time I had met him outside the palace. He wore a deplorable suit of some checkered material, a very loud green necktie and a bowler hat. The first time he received me in private audience after this meeting I jokingly told him that, although I did not expect to see the King wearing his crown on his head and his sceptre instead of a bamboo cane, I would almost have failed to have recognized him if I had not noticed the two officers in uniform following him at a respectful distance. He took it very good-naturedly, and following up the subject in a serious vein, I mentioned some vague rumours that had reached my ears about the corps of officers feeling themselves somewhat neglected by their Sovereign and Commander-in-Chief, in marked contrast to the attitude of his father, who, in consequence, had always enjoyed the greatest popularity in Army circles. I tried my best to make him see the advisability of nursing his popularity among his troops, if for no other reason than regard for his own safety. Perhaps, if he had taken to heart this advice, he would not have fallen a victim to a military conspiracy.

Young as he was, the King was extremely fond, like all Serbians, of talking politics, and the more he had become convinced that I had no political axe to grind, and that I never tried to influence him in his plans or decisions, the more freely did he express himself about all questions of Serbian

party politics. In one of these free and easy talks it occurred to me to say that, in our Government circles it was pretty generally believed that there was in existence a secret treaty concluded by his father with Austria-Hungary, containing some stipulations injurious to Russian interests, and that it might be useful to allay these apprehensions by acquainting us with the real contents of that treaty.

"Nothing can be easier," said the King, who got up, went into his adjoining bedroom and reappeared a few minutes later carrying under his arm a large, red velvet cover, evidently containing some documents.

"There it is," said he; "the authentic instrument of ratification of the treaty, signed by the Emperor Francis Joseph. Now, let us examine it together." Then he sat down by my side on the sofa and we read the text together carefully, article by article. Its substance was simply an agreement between the two Sovereigns, King Milan of Serbia and the Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary, to the effect that the former renounced for himself and his successors all claims to the possession of Bosnia and Herzegovina (which by the Treaty of Berlin had been assigned to occupation by Austria-Hungary for an indefinite period, the Sultan retaining his rights of sovereignty over these provinces), the latter, in return, guaranteeing the integrity of the territory of the Kingdom of Serbia, and the possession of the Serbian throne to the Obrenovitch Dynasty. There was nothing in the treaty to which any exception could reasonably be taken on the part of Russia unless we wished, by encouraging Serbian aims at territorial expansion, to forge a weapon of attack to be used in an emergency against Austria-Hungary, which indeed was quite in harmony with the political tendencies of our Pan-Slavists, whose views, however, were not by any means shared by our Minister of Foreign Affairs.

As soon as I returned from my audience with the King I wrote out from memory the full text of the treaty and sent it, together with my covering dispatch, addressed to Prince Lobanoff, enclosed in a personal letter to the King with a request to let me know whether I had correctly rendered the contents of the treaty. My messenger returned from the palace with a note from the King's secretary in which he informed me that His Majesty had compared my version of

the text with the original and found it substantially correct, but that he had already sent for the Prime Minister and requested him to make himself an authentic copy of the original treaty and to hand it to me for confidential transmission to my Government. The following day Mr. Novakovitch called upon me and brought me the copy he said he had spent half of the night in preparing himself, and he expressed his gratification with and approval of the King's frankness, which he hoped would definitely remove any misgivings that may have been entertained in St. Petersburg in regard to Serbia's attitude.

This little incident showed, I think, conclusively the wisdom of the policy inaugurated by Prince Lobanoff, whose lead in this respect was soon followed by the Austro-Hungarian Government in recalling its representative at Belgrade, who belonged to the camp of militant diplomacy, and replacing him by Mr. Schiessl, a novice in diplomacy, but a very able, level-headed statesman of moderate views and conciliatory disposition, with whom my relations from the very beginning were of a markedly friendly character. So it came about that Belgrade ceased to be, at least temporarily, the battle-field of the traditional struggle for influence between the Russian and Austro-Hungarian diplomacies, to the great astonishment and disappointment of those Serbian politicians who were wont to thrive on such conditions.

The new line of policy struck out by Prince Lobanoff was not at all to the taste of the leaders of the Radical Party, who theretofore had been in the exclusive enjoyment of the support of Russian diplomacy, and who probably foresaw unexpected difficulties in the way of drawing Russia into the sphere of Serbia's territorial ambitions. Nor was it favoured by my French colleague, Mr. Patrimonio, who had been, I believe, on intimate terms with my predecessor, and who seemed to be on similar terms with our military agent, Baron Taube, who took up an attitude of almost open hostility to me.

This state of things illustrates the difficulties a Minister of Foreign Affairs with us sometimes had to contend with, even in his own department, when it became a question of carrying out his own policies which did not meet with the approval of some of his subordinates, whose ambition would



find outside support from the Press, or such bodies as the Slav Benevolent Society ministering to the vagaries of Pan-Slavism, or sometimes even from the Sovereign himself.

My family joined me at Belgrade, where I had rented the main floor of the hotel “ Serbian Crown,” the house which had sheltered our Legation for years before my arrival having become almost uninhabitable. The hotel, which later became known as no longer the “ Serbian,” but the “ Russian Crown,” was situated next to the public garden called “ Kalimegdan,” in front of what used to be the old Turkish fortress. What struck me as peculiar was that, at whatever hour in the middle of the day I happened to be in the garden, I would find all the benches occupied by middle-aged men of professional appearance whom one would have expected to find at work in offices or shops. It puzzled me to know to what class of people these “ idle rich ” could possibly belong, until a Serbian friend explained to me that they were all “ pensioners.”

My rather cynical friend proceeded to explain that as there were in Serbia three political parties, each party counting among its followers a complete set of Government employees—the “ In ” being accommodated with office stools and the “ Outs ” having to sit it out on garden benches in the “ Kalimegdan ”—a benevolent State had provided by law that every Government official after, if I am not mistaken, eight years’ service, was entitled to a small pension, sufficient to enable him to undergo the sitting-out process without risking starvation.

That is the explanation given to me by my Serbian friend. Should it turn out to have been a product of my caustic informant’s imagination, I decline all responsibility for it, and I hope my indulgent readers will pardon me for having told the story.

We soon began to feel very much at home among our surroundings. Belgrade reminded us so much of some Russian provincial towns, such as Kursk, or Orel, or Nijni Novgorod, where my wife, as quite a young motherless girl, had for many years been doing the honours of her father’s official residence on the Kreml, overlooking the majestic Volga, just as we could almost from our windows look at the confluence of the Save and the “ Blue Danube.” The people looked to us so familiar,



just like our Little Russians, or, as it is now the fashion to call them, "Ukrainans." The winter season turned out to be very gay, in spite of the limited social resources of such a small capital, thanks to the presence of the King's mother, Queen Nathalie, the divorced wife of the former King Milan. She was, in a way, a countrywoman of ours, being the daughter of a very wealthy Bessarabian landowner. She was still extremely handsome, tall and graceful, with charmingly gracious and affable manners. She was devoted to her son, and was trying her best to enliven society and to make the palace a centre of gaiety where the poor young King could find relaxation from the cares of State.

There were two palaces side by side ; a larger and modern one in which Queen Nathalie was residing as guest of her son, and a small one called the "Konak" (a Turkish word), originally, I believe, the residence of the Turkish Pasha when Serbia was still a Turkish province or village. The King was living in the small palace, where he was destined to meet his awful fate with his wife in that night of horrors of June 11, 1903. During the winter season several balls, banquets and receptions were given in the larger palace. Even part of the company of the Théâtre français had been invited to Belgrade, and gave a representation of Molière's *Malade imaginaire*, in the great ball-room of the palace. Then there were every fortnight small dances in the King's own palace, to which alternately one-half of the Diplomatic Corps was always invited. The King was passionately fond of dancing, an art in which he showed little proficiency, but indefatigable energy. It was touching to see his mother, when he was sitting down for a moment's rest, coming up to him and tenderly wiping the perspiration off his burning cheeks.

In such a small town "society" was naturally restricted in numbers, and the style of living was very modest, even among foreign diplomats. There were only three of us who kept our own carriages and horses. Otherwise what they call in England "carriage people" were non-existent. Even the number of public conveyances was limited, as far as I can remember, to four or five, so that on occasions like a banquet or ball at the Court, carriages and horses from the royal stables had to be placed at the disposal of the guests.

We were particularly lucky in the personnel of our Legation. We had as First Secretary Mr. Nekludoff, late Minister to Sweden and subsequently Ambassador to Spain, with his charming wife and children. Among the Diplomatic Corps our particular friend was the Italian Minister, the Duke Avarna, who was our almost daily guest. We met him again as a colleague six years later when we were transferred to Athens from Munich. Of the Serbians, we saw most of Mr. Militchevitch, the King's Secretary, a very able, cultivated man of the world, and a perfect gentleman in the best sense of the word. He was sincerely devoted to his young Sovereign and rendered him great services with his wordly experience and well-balanced mind. He seems to have met with due appreciation from his countrymen of all parties, having occupied under the new dynasty two important diplomatic posts in London and in Berlin, where I believe he died shortly before the outbreak of the war.

Not being mixed up in Serbian party politics in the traditional way, I was naturally brought into contact more with the members of the Government of the day than with the party leaders, especially those who were not in sympathy with Prince Lobanoff's new policy toward the Balkan States, which deprived them of the possibility of trading on the support of Russian diplomacy. Their policy was one whose chief aim, the acquisition of territory in the possession of Serbia's neighbours, Austria-Hungary and Turkey, could only be reached by force of arms, and was therefore bound in the end to involve Russia in war.

The real people, the peasantry which composes the bulk of the nation, unquestionably entertain toward Russia very sincere feelings of gratitude and affection as toward a far-away mother, whose beneficent care and powerful protection helped them to free themselves from the Turkish yoke. That these feelings have anything to do with racial affinity, I am not prepared to admit. We have seen similar feelings on the part of the Bulgarians turned into bitter hatred of Russia, to whom they owed their liberation and to whose people they are, if anything, perhaps even more closely related than the Serbians. Besides, do we not witness now a display of extraordinarily bitter hatred between Anglo-Saxons and Germans, members of the same racial family,

no less closely related to each other than Poles are to Russians? That great French philosopher was not so far wrong when he made that apparently cynical remark: "No one can expect to go through life without making enemies, but the enemies given us by Nature are our relations."

I would not have dwelt so long on this question of race affinity were it not that our Pan-Slavists or Nationalists, have adopted this race affinity of the Russian people with the Slavs as the cornerstone of their political system, and that I hold policies based on sentimental considerations of racial sympathy or antipathy to be, perhaps, valuable instruments of demagoguery, but certainly not sound business or statesmanship.

The gauging aright of the feelings of the educated classes is a more difficult task. Their feelings are not as simple and direct as those of the popular masses. The idea of Russia's beneficent motherhood of all Slavdom had evidently undergone some alteration in their minds, and the smiling image of the fairy godmother made room in their eyes for the frown of the stepmother who had clasped to her breast her favourite youngest offspring, the bad boy Bulgaria. At least that was a reproach I heard sometimes delicately and sorrowfully expressed by Serbians, professing at the same time sincere attachment to Russia, and an unshaken belief that in the end she would assist Serbia in the realization of her national ideal. I had to remind them that if in 1876 we had not, by consenting in advance to Austria-Hungary's occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, made sure of the neutrality of that Power we could never have attempted the invasion of the Balkan Peninsula in the following year, which led, not only to the liberation of Bulgaria from the Turkish yoke, but also to the liberation of Serbia herself from Turkish vassalage.

Then again the question of "cultural unification." The Serbians know full well that the culture of Russia herself has been imported from the West. Small wonder that in quest of culture they prefer to go to the fountain-head, to the nearest in Vienna, and, when their means will permit it, to Paris and London, to Russia when scholarships in military schools or other Government institutions can be obtained. At one of the first balls at Court the First Secretary



of our Legation introduced to me a Serbian colonel, mentioning that he wished to obtain a scholarship in one of the Petersburg military schools for his son ; whereupon the colonel addressed me in the most perfect German : " Does your Excellency speak also German ? " To which I made reply : " Of course I do, since that seems to be the common language of Slavs." After which the conversation was continued by me in Russian, and by him in Serbian, although I must confess not without the assistance of Mr. Nekludoff, a proficient Serbian scholar.

Now the question of languages. There can be no doubt that there is more German spoken in Serbia than Russia, and for the same reason. Also the knowledge of German is of greater practical use to the Serbians than the knowledge of Russian, considering that the bulk of their outside commercial business is carried on with Austria-Hungary as the nearest neighbour of Serbia, and necessarily in the German language. In the upper stratum of the Serbian bureaucracy, French was fairly well known as the language generally used in international intercourse by polite society all over Continental Europe. The knowledge of English I found to be limited to a small number of individuals. All this is quite natural. When it comes to making a choice between foreign languages, the issue, except in individual cases, will necessarily be determined not by sentimental motives of racial affinity, but by purely utilitarian considerations.

As regards the ambitious designs, or rather hopes, of territorial expansion, my impression was that popular sentiment was more occupied with the fate of Macedonia than with Bosnia and Herzegovina, let alone Croatia. Macedonia, with the extraordinary tangle of races—Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek and even Koutzo-Wallachian, tyrannized over by an infinitesimally small layer of the ruling Turkish race—had always been a bone of contention between the various races composing its population, the Serbians and Bulgarians each claiming to be the numerically preponderating nationality, the Greeks basing their claim to preponderance not on numbers, but on traditions of ancient history and on cultural superiority. Moreover, the question was complicated by the tendency of the rival Great Powers to take a hand in these disputes according to what each considered to be best



suited to serve its own interests. As an illustration of this state of affairs I might repeat a story told me by a distinguished Serbian statesman, at the time out of office. In the course of a journey through Macedonia, he had reached Salonika and had been entertained at dinner by the Russian Consul-General, reputed to be the greatest authority on the ethnography of the Balkan Peninsula. When my Serbian friend, after dinner over coffee and cigars, asked him for his frank opinion as to whether the Macedonians were Serbians or Bulgarians, he elicited from his host the following illuminating reply: "If you ask me this question as plain Mr. X., I will say they are Serbians, but if you want to know my opinion as Consul-General of Russia, I am bound to say that they are all Bulgarians." There are also in Macedonia people who decline to be considered either Serbians or Bulgarians, and who want to be simply Macedonians.

The question of Bosnia and Herzegovina agitated the minds of the "Intelligentzia" a great deal more than the Macedonian question, because the acquisition of these provinces with a population of unquestionably Serbian stock—although part of it had become Mahomedan during the Turkish regime—would have given Serbia access to the Adriatic. But this aim of Serbian policy could have been reached only in case of a total collapse of Austria-Hungary, a contingency which in those days seemed to be sufficiently remote, in any event less likely to happen than the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The same could, of course, be said of Croatia, whose population, although of Serbian stock, belonged not to the Orthodox Greek Church as the Serbians of the Kingdom, but to the Roman Catholic Church, and between the two branches of the Serbian family there was not much love lost.

But, taken all in all, during this year of my sojourn in Serbia there was a lull in what is called *la grande politique*, that delight of ambitious diplomats and bellicose general staffs, and at the same time that unmitigated curse of the peoples who in the end have to pay for its vagaries with their blood and treasure. This comparative quiet was due, in a great measure, to the advent of a new reign in Russia, and to the prevailing uncertainty as to the character it would assume.

## CHAPTER XIV

Nicholas of Montenegro—Ferdinand of Bulgaria—Offer of the post of Minister to Japan—An unexpected delay—"That confounded Korean business"—Death of Prince Lobanoff—Dr. E. J. Dillon on "The Tsar's Plot"—Mr. Nelidoff—Temporary return to Belgrade—Secret orders—Count Mouravieff—My appointment to Japan ratified.

TIME passed, we hardly noticed how quickly, and summer was at the door almost before we had had time to think of where we should go so as to avoid the intolerable mid-summer heat at Belgrade. Before we could leave for a summer holiday we witnessed the arrival, on a short visit to the King, of two semi-royal guests, Prince Nicholas of Montenegro and Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, both on their way home from Moscow, where they had been present at the ceremony of the coronation of the Emperor Nicholas II. The former seemed to me to be less satisfied with his reception by the young Emperor, at any rate he reminded me when I went to pay him my respects, in a tone of melancholy regret, of the famous toast of Alexander III, who had called him his only friend. He had, however, every reason to congratulate himself upon the success of his visit to Moscow, as it was there, it appears, that the marriage between his daughter, Princess Helen, and the then Crown Prince of Italy was decided upon.

The Prince of Bulgaria seemed highly delighted with his reception in Moscow. It was his first visit to the Russian Court after the reconciliation brought about by his son and heir, Prince Boris, having joined the Orthodox Church, the Emperor Nicholas standing godfather. At the solemn banquet given in his honour at the Palace I was seated next to the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Stoiloff, and watched the anxious expression of his face when the Prince, who had prepared a speech in French in reply to the King's expected toast in the same language, got up to reply to the King,

who had unexpectedly spoken in Serbian, and without a moment's hesitation began his rather lengthy extemporized reply in Bulgarian. After the first words spoken by the Prince with perfect assurance in his best oratorical manner, and in the purest Bulgarian, my Bulgarian neighbour leaned back in his chair with evident pride and satisfaction, and beaming on me, said :

“ This is the way His Royal Highness speaks Bulgarian, better even than any of us.”

After the dinner the Prince held the usual reception of the members of the Diplomatic Corps, which he carried off with the easy assurance of a past-master of the art, in singular contrast to the embarrassed awkwardness of the poor young King on similar occasions. He seemed to be much gratified by the reception he had met with in Russia and was evidently in an elated frame of mind. He naturally honoured me as representative of Russia with a demonstratively lengthy talk, interlarding his French conversation with many Russian expressions in a very amusing way. During the reception he had dispatches and telegrams brought to him, which he, interrupting the ceremony, proceeded to read in a neighbouring salon, giving orders to his aides, and so on ; in short, bent on impressing us as a busy man of affairs, full of bustle and energy.

After the festivities were over we departed for Vienna, where we were to separate, my family going to Switzerland for the summer and I to St. Petersburg to report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs before beginning my vacation. In Vienna I read in the local papers the announcement of the sudden death of our Minister to Japan, Mr. Hitrovo, and I had a vague presentiment that I should be appointed to succeed him. Directly I arrived, Prince Lobanoff sent for me and asked me if I would be willing to go to Tokio, and, if so, whether I could start with the least delay possible. Upon my having declared my entire willingness to conform to his wishes, he said he would, the very next day, at his weekly audience—held every Tuesday—with the Emperor, submit my appointment for His Majesty's signature. The day after his audience he sent for me again and told me that he had not been able to get the Emperor's signature, although His Majesty had in principle consented to my



appointment, but that the matter would surely be settled next week. However, the next Tuesday he came back from Tsarskoe Selo still without the signed decree, and told me that there was some hitch, but nothing personal to me, adding that it was again "that confounded Korean business." As he did not volunteer any explanation, and I could not properly press him for it, I went to see the Chief of the Asiatic Department, Count Kapnist, one of Prince Lobanoff's favourites, and, like his brother, our Ambassador at Vienna, a friend of mine, and asked him whether he could tell me what Prince Lobanoff's curious allusion to Korean affairs could have meant in connection with the question of my appointment. This is what he told me confidentially, and I have no hesitation in making public his story, considering that all this is now a matter of history and all the personages involved in it are no more of this world.

During the coronation festivities in Moscow, in May 1896, when Prince Lobanoff and Mr. Witte, as he then was, were negotiating with Li Hung Chang, the famous Manchurian railroad convention under the watchful eyes of Marshal Yamagata, the Japanese Special Ambassador, an ambassador from the King of Korea made his appearance and, having obtained a private audience, submitted to the Emperor Nicholas the request of his Sovereign to be taken under the protectorate of Russia. The Emperor, it appears, had then and there granted this request without previous consultation with his Minister of Foreign Affairs. Now, I feel bound to say, in extenuation of the grave and, in its consequences, fatal error committed in this matter by the Emperor, that, given his very limited knowledge of international relations and his total inexperience in the handling of affairs of State—which it would be unjust to reproach him with, as he had never been given an opportunity of acquiring any such experience—it was but natural for him to see in such a request nothing but a very proper acknowledgment of and homage to his power and greatness and to be utterly unsuspecting of any danger lurking under a promise of protection given by a great monarch to a humble semi-barbarous potentate, ruler of a small and insignificant kingdom. This I believe to be the true psychological



explanation of the Emperor's injudicious action, which, however, when it became known to Prince Lobanoff—possibly even from the lips of His Majesty himself—provoked his just indignation and serious apprehension. What passed between the Emperor and his Minister will probably never be known; but from that moment a coolness began to affect the relations between the Emperor and the Prince.

The fact of this promise of a protectorate having been given was, of course, not published, and probably every possible precaution was taken in order to guard the secret, but it is hardly credible that such watchful and experienced observers as the Japanese should have long remained in ignorance of a fact so closely affecting their interests in Korea. Meanwhile our Minister to Japan, the late Mr. Hitrovo, had opened the eyes of Prince Lobanoff to the necessity of treating Korean affairs with the utmost caution if we wished to avoid a serious conflict with Japan, whose determination to defend her interests in that country at all hazards, even at the risk of war, could not be doubted for a moment. Prince Lobanoff, convinced of the wisdom of this advice, was naturally anxious to remove all causes that might have led to friction with Japan. One of the possible causes of such friction was the presence at Seoul, the capital of Korea, as Diplomatic Agent of Russia, of a Mr. Weber, who had acquired considerable influence over the King of Korea, and whose activity there had attracted the suspicious attention of the Japanese Government. He proposed, therefore, to replace him at Seoul by a Mr. Speyer, who was acting as *Chargé d'Affaires* in Japan, and he had offered Mr. Weber my post in Mexico. This arrangement, however, did not seem to suit the Emperor, who apparently wished to prolong the stay of Mr. Weber in Korea; and so my appointment to Japan was indefinitely delayed, because on my arrival in Tokio depended the possibility of removing Speyer to Korea and Weber to Mexico. Prince Lobanoff did not give up the hope of having things settled in accordance with his wishes, and he instructed me not to return to Belgrade until my appointment had been definitely made, when I might go there on my way to Japan if I wished to present in person my letters of recall. There being no

further reason for my staying in the empty capital in midsummer, I left to join my family in Switzerland.

Shortly afterwards Prince Lobanoff, as Minister in attendance on the Emperor, started with their Majesties on their tour of visits to different European capitals. He died suddenly of apoplexy in the Imperial train at a station not far from Kieff on August 30, 1896. To the inexperienced young Emperor his loss was irreparable, and amounted to little short of a catastrophe.

The Imperial tour, once begun, could, of course, neither be given up nor postponed, and there was no one available at a moment's notice to fill at all adequately the defunct statesman's place. Prince Lobanoff's place in European politics, in spite of his having had the direction of Russian policy for barely eighteen months, had, indeed, become one of great and generally acknowledged importance. Neither the unusual energy he had caused Russian diplomacy to display nor the somewhat haughty tone he had adopted towards foreign Governments and diplomats had provoked any serious apprehensions, such was the confidence which his well-known disposition in favour of the maintenance of peace and his great ability and strength of character had inspired everywhere. His heritage could have been worthily borne only by the strongest shoulders. But such an heir was not forthcoming, nor was one ever found before the Russian Empire had become but a memory of a glorious past. Personally I had every reason to deplore the passing of the only Minister of Foreign Affairs who during all the long years of my diplomatic career had ever treated me with entire confidence and real regard.

Nothing remained for the Emperor but to take with him on this very important journey the defunct Minister's assistant, Mr. Shishkine, a worthy old gentleman but politically an absolute nonentity, and quite incompetent to direct the foreign policy of a great country in the serious times the approach of which was instinctively felt everywhere in Europe.

When the summer was over, and I had not had any further news in regard to my projected appointment to Japan, I made up my mind to try to ascertain whether it would not be possible to have this vexed question settled

one way or the other. We accordingly went to St. Petersburg, where, my fate still remaining undecided, we spent the autumn and part of the winter until I was ordered to return temporarily to Belgrade in connection with a diplomatic combination, to which I refer later on.

During the months I spent at the capital I was naturally a frequent visitor at the Foreign Office, where I had a warm friend and former colleague who occupied an important position in the Asiatic Department. In this way I became acquainted with the details of an incident with which Dr. Dillon, in his *Eclipse of Russia*, deals exhaustively under the heading "The Tsar's Plot to Seize the Heights of the Upper Bosphorus." I shall not attempt to reproduce in these pages the story told by Dr. Dillon, with elaborate accuracy, of this extraordinary plot, which he justly describes as a "criminal plan"—although it must be owned that there is no Government under the sun that has not at one time or other conceived or occasionally even realized similar "criminal plans." With Dr. Dillon I disagree only when he calls it "The Tsar's Plot," although in his account of the affair he justly attributes to our Ambassador at Constantinople, Mr. Nelidoff, the authorship of this nefarious plan, the execution, or even attempted execution, of which would unquestionably have spelt disaster to Russia. The unfortunate Emperor has enough to answer for without being saddled with responsibility for an intended crime in which his participation was merely that of a weakling Sovereign, who had neither the insight to realize the criminal folly of the project submitted for his approval nor the strength of will to put his foot down on it as his father would have done. The honourable part played on this occasion by two rival statesmen, Witte and Pobiedonostzeff, of whom the greater one unhesitatingly sought and found the willing co-operation of the lesser one in defeating that nefarious plan, does them the greatest credit, and Dr. Dillon deserves well of their memory by having placed in the proper light their unselfish devotion to the true interests of their country.

I cannot defend the incredible levity with which an experienced diplomat, a man of irreproachable honour and ability, such as Mr. Nelidoff, could have ventured to submit



to his Sovereign a project of the highly dangerous and risky character of which he could not but have been well aware ; still, I should like to say something in explanation of the psychological motives that may have led him to commit an act the doubtful rectitude of which must have been apparent to him.

The fundamental defect of the regime of autocracy is the concentration in the person of the autocrat of the sole responsibility for every act of his Government. Recognition of this dangerous principle inevitably deadens the sense of personal responsibility in individual servants of the Crown. Thus a statesman might with perfect *bona fides* submit to his Sovereign a plan of doubtful applicability but based on highly patriotic considerations, feeling that, whether his plan be approved or rejected, he had done his patriotic duty, and that in case of its subsequent failure his would not be the responsibility, but the autocrat’s who had approved it. This, of course, could not be pleaded as an excuse, but does in a measure, it seems to me, serve as a psychological explanation of what necessarily always remains an act of extraordinary levity.

Another psychological explanation might be found in the tendency of our “ *Intelligentzia* ” to let themselves be carried away by patriotic and clever-sounding slogans, such as, in the present case, the ever-repeated saying : “ The Straits are the key to the door of our house ; we must put that key in our pocket.” The number of people was astonishingly large who would swear by the absolute necessity for Russia of securing at any cost possession of the Straits, until one fine day they were declared to be of no account, as Mr. Iswolsky found out to his cost, when, as Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1909, he attempted to trade away Russia’s consent to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary for that Power’s consent to our taking possession of these Straits, and when he was unanimously accused by our patriotic Press of having betrayed the sacred cause of Slavdom for a mess of pottage.

This whole episode was an extremely interesting one, but I can here only refer those who wish to know more about it to Dr. Dillon’s very detailed and entirely truthful account of it in his *Eclipse of Russia*. Fortunately, and thanks



exclusively to the timely intervention of Witte and Pobiedonostzeff, it had no immediate disastrous consequences but the probabilities are that the secret became at least partially known to the interested parties, and contributed to strengthen the suspicions with which our policy in the Near East had always been regarded by the Western Powers, no less than by the Turks.

All my endeavours to bring to a decisive issue the question of my appointment to Japan proved unavailing, partly, I suppose, because Mr. Shishkine, as a merely temporary acting Chief of the Foreign Department, did not feel like pressing the Emperor for a decision, being afraid of indisposing His Majesty by such insistence, and partly, perhaps, because he entertained some hopes of being himself appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, when he would feel more at liberty to take up the question.

At last he sent for me and told me that I would have to return immediately to Belgrade, but only for a short time, in order to attend to some important business that had cropped up unexpectedly. He proceeded to explain that Mr. Nelidoff, our Ambassador at Constantinople, and Mr. Tcharykoff, our Diplomatic Agent in Bulgaria, had between them devised a plan for the organization of an alliance of the Balkan Powers, the initiative of which should be taken by Bulgaria, our participation in the affair in suggesting this plan to the Bulgarians remaining a profound secret. I was therefore instructed to proceed at once to Belgrade and to give my vigorous support to the proposal with which the Bulgarian Government would approach Serbia, but to see to it that the secret should not leak out.

With these instructions in my pocket I left in hot haste for Belgrade, where I found a Radical Ministry in power, headed by Mr. Simitch, for many years Serbian Minister in Vienna, an experienced and able diplomat of moderate views. A couple of days after my arrival, at a late hour in the evening, I was surprised by the visit of Mr. Simitch, who seemed to be in a state of some excitement and elation. He said he had come with wonderfully good news. The Bulgarian Diplomatic Agent had just called upon him and announced that Russia had decided to organize a Balkan Alliance, and that the Bulgarian Government hoped to find

Serbia willing to join the Alliance. Seeing that the famous secret had leaked out, and might compromise our Government in an undesirable way, I had nothing left but to deny the existence of any such decision as had been attributed to Russia by the Bulgarian representative.

This incident shows once more the inconvenience, not to say the danger, of suffering subordinate agents (for such, after all, are Ambassadors no less than mere Ministers Plenipotentiary) to strike out lines of policy of their own.

In the meantime the appointment of a new Minister of Foreign Affairs to succeed Prince Lobanoff had taken place, the Emperor's choice, after nearly six months of hesitation, falling on Count Mouravieff, our Minister at Copenhagen.

This choice was not quite a surprise, as, there being no other candidates in the field, it had seemed probable that the Emperor would in the end select some diplomat whom he happened to know personally, and whom he had met at Copenhagen, where our Imperial family had been frequent guests at the Danish Court. I had never met Count Mouravieff, and all I knew about him was from hearsay, namely, that he was rather ignorant and very superficial, but gifted with a good deal of sound common sense, and an experienced courtier.

My curiosity to know him was to be gratified pretty soon. A month later I received a telegram from him informing me that the Emperor had signed my appointment as Minister to Japan, and that my letters of recall from my post in Serbia were being forwarded to me.

The following week I returned to St. Petersburg in order to acquaint myself thoroughly with the state of our relations with Japan, in regard to which I had already conceived some misgivings.

## CHAPTER XV

Departure from Belgrade—A farewell message—Count Mouravieff—  
A dangerous plan—Development of Far Eastern affairs during  
Prince Lobanoff's term of office.

IT was in January 1897 that I presented my letters of recall to the King of Serbia, who expressed in most cordial terms his regret at my departure, and sent me the same evening a last farewell message through his secretary, Mr. Milichewitch, who had orders to see me off to the station. Mr. Milichewitch found me at my hotel engaged in packing up a number of books which had accumulated during my sojourn at Belgrade, among them some volumes of the correspondence of the Empress Catherine the Great. I had accidentally dropped on the floor one of these volumes, and when I picked it up I noticed that it had opened on a page containing a letter addressed by the Empress to the King of Denmark. Listening to what Mr. Milichewitch was telling me about the King's intention to change again his Ministry for a new one, and the grave concern with which he looked upon His Majesty's fickleness of character and lack of firm purpose, unconsciously my eyes fell on a passage in the letter where she lectures her correspondent on the disadvantages and even dangers of frequent changes in the Governments. I read the passage to Milichewitch, and he was much struck by the wisdom of the advice which the Empress had tendered to her fellow Sovereign, and by its applicability to actual conditions in Serbia.

"I'll tell you what I will do," said I; "I'll immediately copy this whole passage of the letter, sign it with my name as the faithful copyist, and you will present it to the King as a parting gift from a sincere friend and posthumous representative of one of the greatest Sovereigns Russia has ever had."

I verily believe we two could not have rendered the young Sovereign a better service, provided he had been willing to take to heart Catherine the Great's sage advice.

Three days later I was in St. Petersburg, and after a brief interview with Count Mouravieff, whom I found very courteous and apparently well disposed toward me, I set to work to make a thorough study of our relations with Japan and of the whole field of our Far Eastern policy. I instinctively felt that I would have to face the probability of coming serious complications. My premonitions had not deceived me, as I found out almost as soon as I had begun my work. In looking over correspondence exchanged with the War Department, I discovered traces of a far-reaching plan, evidently having originated in that Department, which would have landed us in a situation of the gravest danger. I lost no time in reporting to the Minister the fact, and my conclusions in regard to the necessity of preventing, if still possible, any decisive steps being taken in pursuit of the War Department's plans. Count Mouravieff at once saw the point, and assented to my proposal to prepare an exhaustive memorandum on the state of affairs in the Far East to be submitted to the Emperor in the hope of causing His Majesty to withhold his approval of the plans. The Minister undertook that the whole matter should be kept in suspense until the memorandum was ready for submission to the Emperor.

The original of this rather voluminous memorandum was deposited in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which, if not destroyed by them, must be at present in the possession of the Bolsheviks. Two years ago I lent my only copy of it to the Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhailovitch, well known as an author and promoter of historical research, with whom I had been for years in intimate friendly relations and who was so cruelly murdered by the savage bandits exercising tyrannical power in our unfortunate country. This copy has probably shared the fate of the Grand Duke's library and other contents of his beautiful palace at St. Petersburg. I cannot, therefore, give more than a succinct account of the main features of this memorandum. Before doing so, however, I must revert to the time when Prince Lobanoff was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, and



found himself confronted with the situation created by the result of the war between China and Japan.

The defunct Minister, when he took office, was quite ignorant of Far Eastern affairs, which was very natural, seeing that he belonged to a generation whose ideas of China and Japan were mostly connected with pictures of pig-tailed mandarins on boxes of tea, or red lacquer cups and saucers brought home by bold travellers. Prince Lobanoff was a man of great decision and firmness of will, but his intellectual pride made him reluctant to seek advice in matters of which he was more or less ignorant. Thus, he would not avail himself of the wide experience and profound knowledge of Far Eastern affairs of Mr. Zinovieff, who had been for ten years the head of the Asiatic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and who happened to be in St. Petersburg, but preferred instead to have himself informed by a mere underling, the chief of the Japanese bureau, a respectable official with the narrow outlook of a departmental clerk.

The situation was a perplexing one indeed. The Japanese Government, before deciding upon hostilities against China, had been greatly concerned with the elucidation of the views and intentions of the Russian Government, and had evidently been prepared to conform to any wishes of ours, the compliance with which would have assured our neutrality and guaranteed them against any threatening movement on our part on their exposed flank in the event of military operations on the continent. Our position, therefore, was a very advantageous one, somewhat similar to that of Austria-Hungary when we were preparing for war with Turkey in 1877. It would have enabled us to secure the realization of any well-considered and clearly-defined political aim we might have intended to pursue. Unfortunately, there was a total absence of any clear conception of what the aims of our Far Eastern policy should be. In this respect our Government circles were just as much in the dark as was our so-called "public opinion," as represented by the Press. The impending conflict between our two most important neighbours in Asia was instinctively felt as an untoward event; but no attempts at preventing its outbreak, nor any plan for taking advantage of our flanking position which

gave us the whip hand over the belligerents, seemed to have been contemplated, considerations such as would, as matter of course, have guided the policy of real statesmanship, as, for example, the British, under similar circumstances.

The Japanese Government, realizing the hopelessness of their endeavours to reach an agreement with us, decided at last to take the risk of military operations against China on the continent without having provided for the security of their flank by an understanding with Russia. Subsequent events belied the expectations generally entertained by European diplomacy that the war, which was held to be a foolhardy enterprise on the part of Japanese militarism, would end in disaster to the reckless aggressor. The treaty of peace concluded in April 1895, at Shimonoseki, sealed the complete defeat of China, and gave to Japan, besides a war indemnity of two hundred million taels, part of Southern Manchuria, with the stronghold of Port Arthur; that is to say, a permanent foothold on the continent of Asia and the certainty of the prospective absorption of Korea, although in the treaty the complete independence of Korea and the integrity of her territory were solemnly recognized by both parties.

Such was the situation when Prince Lobanoff became Minister of Foreign Affairs. Matters had been allowed to drift without any definite policy having been decided upon, or even seriously considered. Such an attitude, however, could not continue indefinitely, and the time had come for our Government to take a decided stand one way or the other. It would not come amiss to mention here an outside disturbing element which had developed during the hostilities between the belligerents, an element which usually makes itself felt in Far Eastern no less than in Near Eastern affairs—the perennial rivalry between the Great Powers of Europe. In the beginning of the war, Japanese public opinion had been more or less under the impression that Russia would be inclined to side with Japan, an impression which prevailed likewise in our maritime province. This expectation had, seemingly, not failed to influence, in a measure, the attitude towards the belligerents, if not of the British Government, at least of its representatives, diplomatic

as well as naval, in the Far East. At any rate, the story had been going the rounds in Japan, and been generally credited, that the Admiral in command of the British squadron in Far Eastern waters had demonstratively shown his preference for the Chinese, and he was even suspected of having, on some occasion, endeavoured to warn by signal the Chinese Admiral of the approach of the Japanese fleet. Later on, the Admiral's attitude was said to have undergone a radical change, brought on partly by the brilliant Japanese victories, partly by the growing certitude that Russia would remain neutral, with perhaps a leaning in favour, not of Japan, but of China. Whether true or not, the wide currency given to these stories was symptomatic of the probability that whichever side we might ultimately decide to favour, Great Britain would be found to have taken up her stand by the other. This, therefore, was a contingency, howsoever remote, which would have to be taken into the most serious consideration when circumstances would compel us to take a decided stand one way or the other.

Prince Lobanoff naturally felt disinclined to shoulder alone the responsibility for so momentous a decision, and he secured the Emperor's consent to submit the whole question to a Special Commission under the presidency of the Grand Duke Alexis, then head of the Navy, and composed of all the Ministers of State. The proceedings of this Commission were naturally secret, but I was given, of course, the possibility of acquainting myself with the contents of the protocols of its sittings. The perusal of these protocols gave me the impression that none of the members of the Commission had shed any new light on the questions at issue, which, after all, was not surprising, considering that their knowledge of conditions in the Far East was of the vaguest and most limited nature. Their deliberations were mostly confined to an exchange of views based on this or that member's personal preferences for Japan or China. The final conclusions were formulated by Prince Lobanoff upon the simple ground that the Japanese could not be allowed to gain a foothold on the continent, because they would unavoidably have a tendency to spread like "a drop of oil on a sheet of blotting-paper," as he expressed it. It was therefore decided to side with China, and to take the



necessary steps to insist on the withdrawal of Japan from Southern Manchuria and Port Arthur; in other words, on the abandonment, by the Japanese, of the fruits of their victory. This decision was confirmed by the Emperor.

Being anxious to gain as complete an insight as possible into the origin of the serious complications I felt sure we would have to face in the near future, and knowing from casual conversations with the Grand Duke Alexis that his views could hardly have been in harmony with those of the members of the Commission, I made up my mind to interview him personally on the subject of the decision, the far-reaching consequences of which he would have been in a much better position to have foreseen than the other members. From the very first words he spoke to me I realized how deeply he was concerned as Grand Admiral and head of the Navy, and impressed with the serious character of the decision, to which he, personally, had been very much opposed. When I told him that I had been surprised to find that he had not taken any active part in the discussion, and had refrained from giving utterance to his own views, the Grand Duke said that he regretted it greatly now, but that at the time he had felt a delicacy about expressing a divergent opinion which might have been interpreted as an attempt at influencing the decisions of responsible Ministers on the strength of his personal position and the prestige of his rank.

Prince Lobanoff, having undertaken to carry out the decision reached by the Commission and approved by the Emperor, applied to this task all his ingenuity, his diplomatic experiences, his great personal prestige and his firm will. He realized that it would be impossible for Russia alone to approach victorious Japan with a demand so deeply wounding to the susceptibility of a proud and combative nation. It was, therefore, manifestly necessary to associate with Russia at least two other Powers in the attempt to oust Japan from the continent of Asia. Great Britain being out of the question, Austria-Hungary being useless, there only remained two Powers who could be of assistance in exercising the required pressure on the Japanese—France and Germany—whose joint co-operation it was evidently no easy task to secure. It did not, however, prove beyond Prince



Lobanoff's diplomatic skill. Playing partly on the jealousy of the French Government, and partly on the eagerness of the Emperor William to seize any occasion which might, through even a temporary *rapprochement* with both Russia and France, promise to bring him nearer the realization of his pet dream—a Franco-Russo-German alliance, Prince Lobanoff persuaded both these Powers to join Russia in recommending to the Japanese Government the retrocession to China of the territory ceded by the Treaty of Shimonoseki, on the plea that Japan's tenure of the littoral of Manchuria would menace the security of the Chinese capital, would render the independence of Korea illusory, and would be an element endangering the peace of the Far East. That these two Powers should have been induced to take part in a diplomatic campaign by which they could not possibly gain anything, and by which they were certain to incur the displeasure—perhaps the lasting displeasure—of a Power with whom they had every reason to cultivate friendly relations, must be set down as a signal triumph of Prince Lobanoff's diplomacy.

As to the view taken by the Japanese of this intervention I may cite the opinion expressed to me five years later, after we had taken possession ourselves of Port Arthur, by one of my Japanese friends :

“ We can understand why you should have insisted on our evacuation of the Manchurian littoral—we also understand why the French, being your allies, should have lent you their support ; we fail, however, to understand what caused the action of Germany in a matter which was no concern of hers—but we shall remember ! ”

And they did. It appears, moreover, that in pressing upon the Japanese Government compliance with the demands of the three Powers, the German Minister at Tokio adopted a tone of particular aggressiveness, contrasting with the studiously moderate and courteous attitude of his French and Russian colleagues, and that in this respect he had been merely obeying very stringent instructions received from the Emperor himself, supposed to have been desirous of accentuating his particular zeal in the common cause.

Although the recommendation of the coalition was presented in the most courteous terms, it was plain that the

three Powers were prepared to enforce their advice by a resort to force. Exhausted by the campaign on the continent, her financial resources, as well as her supply of war material, more or less drained, her fleet, after eight continuous months at sea, unable to cope with the superior naval forces of the coalition, and her army on the continent exposed to the risk of being cut off, the Japanese Government bowed to the inevitable. An Imperial decree was published in which the Emperor was made to say that, being unalterably devoted to the cause of peace and recognizing that the counsel of the three European Powers was prompted by the same sentiment, he accepted their advice. In due time, without any unnecessary delay, Manchuria was evacuated, and all Japanese troops were withdrawn from the continent with the exception of a detachment left to occupy Wei-hai-Wei until the final payment of the war indemnity. Thereupon Japan quietly proceeded to prepare plans for doubling her army and trebling her naval forces.

These warlike preparations, the meaning of which could hardly be misunderstood, were facilitated financially by the payment of an additional hundred million taels imposed upon China by the coalition as a compensation for the retrocession by Japan of the ceded territories in Southern Manchuria. In order to provide funds for this payment, the Russian Government undertook to place on the Paris market a Chinese Government loan with a Russian guarantee of four per cent. interest. This financial combination could, naturally, not have been conceived without the participation of Mr. Witte, then Minister of Finance, who was most loyally and energetically supporting Prince Lobanoff's policy. It proved, however, the entering wedge which led us into further politico-financial combinations in connection with Manchuria, in regard to which I, in the end, found myself in disagreement with the great statesman who had been fathering and promoting them. But this is a subject to which I shall revert later on.

Adequate compensation for our successful intervention, which resulted in the restitution of the integrity of China, was found in the grant by China of the right of way through Northern Manchuria to our Trans-Siberian Railway, whose

line by this means, instead of following the great bend of the River Amur, could be shortened by several hundred miles. The negotiations on this subject were carried on at Moscow during the coronation festivities in May 1896, between Prince Lobanoff and Witte on one side and Li Hung Chang on the other. They resulted in the grant of a railway concession to the recently founded Russo-Chinese Bank, a hybrid, semi-political financial institution, the capital of which was furnished partly by the Russian treasury, partly by French financiers, and in which a limited share was allotted to the Chinese Government. With the concession went also the grant of a wide strip of land on both sides of the railway, which was to be exempt from Chinese jurisdiction, and in which Russian settlements gradually grew up, one of them at Harbin attaining the proportions of a moderate-sized town. Another concession was the permission to use, in case of an emergency, the port of Kiao-chow as a naval base for our fleet in Far Eastern waters. This seemingly aimless arrangement was probably meant to satisfy the claims to consideration of our naval General Staff, possibly occupied with the elaboration of some vague strategical plans and combinations; it turned out, however, as will be seen in the sequel, to have contributed indirectly to the conception and realization of another plan of real and far-reaching importance.

Whether our War Department had likewise, unknown perhaps to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, conceived some plan of action in another direction, I do not know. It is possible that such may have been the case and that the discovery of the existence of such a plan may have been one of the causes of the coolness between the Emperor and his Minister as a consequence of the promise given by His Majesty to the Korean Ambassador, as related in a preceding chapter. All I know is that in the summer or the autumn of the year of the coronation, which was also the year of the death of Prince Lobanoff, the War Department had despatched to Korea a certain Colonel of the Grand General Staff, with the result that he had brought back an elaborate plan for the organization of a Korean army of two hundred and fifty thousand men, capable of being expanded to double its size. This organization was to be effected by a special

military mission composed of officers of all arms of the Russian Army.

Furthermore, I found out that our Naval Department was on the outlook for an ice-free port, open all the year round, somewhere in Korea, and was entertaining vague plans of a future acquisition of one of them, preferably the port of Mozampo, on the southern extremity of the Korean Peninsula, as a permanent naval station for our fleet in Far Eastern waters, Vladivostok not being considered satisfactory on the ground that the port is usually closed by ice for some time every winter. Whether such plans had been inspired by the knowledge that some kind of a protectorate had been promised to the King of Korea I am unable to say. The Minister of the Navy, Admiral Tirtoff, who was a particular friend of mine, never mentioned to me anything of the kind, although he knew that I was engaged on a very important investigation of the political situation in the Far East. But then he may have been bound to secrecy in regard to the matter, which, on account of its extremely delicate nature, required to be handled with the greatest circumspection.



## CHAPTER XVI

Preparation of a secret memorandum on the subject of our Far Eastern policy in connection with the state of our relations with Japan—Baron Motono—Audience with the Emperor—Departure for Japan via New York and Canada—Sir William Van Horne.

HAVING made these various discoveries and acquainted myself with the detailed information in the possession of our Naval Department in regard to the Japanese programme of naval armaments which was to be completed in 1904, I set to work on my memorandum in the firm conviction that we were already engaged in a line of policy which could only end in an armed conflict with Japan. In this conviction I was not in the least shaken by the optimistic reports of our Chargé d’Affaires at Tokio, one of those young diplomatic hopefuls who are always ready to recommend to their Government “forward policies” in the hope of thereby acquiring credit for activity and patriotism. This particular young gentleman kept assuring the Foreign Department in his reports—which were much relished in high places—that it was perfectly safe to go ahead with any plans we might wish to put through in Korea, quite regardless of Japanese feelings and objections, and that the utmost manifestation of Japan’s displeasure would probably take the form of the dismissal of a Ministry which should have failed to arrest our progress.

The first point I brought out in my memorandum was that in the Far East we had to face a situation essentially different from the conditions we had been accustomed to deal with, and had dealt with on the whole successfully, in Central Asia. There we found ourselves face to face with a lower grade of civilization, with populations living either in a state of anarchy or under tyrannical misrule, to whom our advent brought law and order and security of life and property, and therefore could be, and generally was, hailed as a

positive benefit, our bureaucratic regime, even with all its defects, being immeasurably superior to the state of things they had endured under their native rulers. Therefore it was to some extent excusable that our military authorities in Central Asia were suffered to assume some latitude in dealing with neighbouring semi-barbarous States and in encroaching ever more and more on their territories, thereby compelling the Central Government to sanction in the end such annexations in spite of its desire to avoid them. In the Far East, on the contrary, we have to deal with two great States, one immense in territory and population, the other not large in size but unapproachable as an island empire, with a compact population full of ardent and aggressive patriotism and combative military spirit, both with a highly developed social fabric and refined culture.

It was imperatively necessary to establish first of all the precise and concrete aim our policy should pursue. We should begin by eliminating from the field of our policies—and not only in the Far East—all such vague aims as hegemony, predominant influence, or similar imponderabilia of more than doubtful value, the pursuit of which could only excite rivalry, suspicion and general hostility, and might at any moment embroil us in most dangerous complications. Next, having determined the aim of our policy, it would be necessary to examine most carefully the question whether the aim corresponds to any real need of the State, whether it is practically attainable, whether its pursuit would expose us to the danger of an armed conflict with a powerful neighbouring State, whether in the event of such conflict we would be prepared to support our policy with all the power and resources of the Empire, and lastly, whether the results obtained in case of victory would justify the inevitable sacrifices in blood and treasure.

Therefore, to begin with, we must ask ourselves a question of fundamental importance: Could territorial expansion in the Far East—or for the matter of that anywhere—be considered a legitimate aim of our policy, and could its achievement in any way, barring the vainglorious satisfaction of success, benefit the State and promote the welfare of the people?

In the case of an immense and already overgrown Empire,

one part of which in Europe is still under-populated and the other and far greater part in Asia can hardly be said to be populated at all in proportion to its colossal extent—this question, it would seem, could only be answered most categorically in the negative. Moreover, the acquisition of any new territory in the Far East at such an enormous distance from the centre of the Empire could only contribute an additional weakening element to a position already precarious enough and maintained less by actual power than by prestige.

Turning next to the question whether territorial expansion in the direction of Korea—the only question I had to deal with, everything concerning Manchuria belonging to the province of my colleague at Peking—was practically attainable without running the risk of an armed conflict with Japan, I had not only to negative it most emphatically, but to point out that the Japanese Government, manifestly suspicious of our intentions, were already actively preparing for the coming conflict, the outbreak of which would probably coincide with the completion of their programme of naval armaments in 1904. Of the firm determination of the Japanese Government to defend their interests in Korea against all comers by force of arms and at all hazards, I was absolutely convinced from what I knew of the Japanese character, of the state of popular feeling in Japan and of the policies of her Government. The whole question therefore reduced itself to a simple proposition: Are we prepared to support our aggressive policy in the Far East at any cost, and with all the resources of the State? If not, the continuation of such a policy would be equivalent to courting disaster in the form either of military defeat or of the loss of the main support of our position, our prestige. If, however, we are prepared to stake our all on the result of a campaign in the Far East, what could be the result of a victorious campaign, and how far would such result have justified the sacrifices by which it had been achieved? Granted the conquest of Korea after the annihilation or expulsion from the continent of the Japanese forces, which in any case we should have had to fight in Korea, the annexation of a kingdom equal in size to Italy could hardly have entered into our plans for the reasons mentioned above. We should have had



to limit ourselves to the acquisition of, let us say, Mozampo, hardly an adequate justification for a sanguinary war. Besides, such an exposed point would be valueless in time of war and would easily become the prey of a more powerful maritime Power. Of the three countries, Russia, England and Japan, having considerable naval forces stationed in those waters, England was potentially immeasurably the strongest, but having widespread interests to guard all over the globe, she did not detail to the Far East more of her fighting units than was necessary to maintain a fair show, inferior to the Japanese fleet, but equal or perhaps slightly superior to ours. No one of these three Powers could claim absolute command of the China-Japan sea with their forces actually on the spot ; but any two of them in concert could realize such command in this way : Russia and Japan united could do so, as long as England did not increase her forces sufficiently to outnumber them ; which, however, would inconvenience her considerably by necessitating the withdrawal of some of her naval resources from other parts of the world where they might have been sorely needed. On the other hand, England and Japan united, with their forces actually present, could checkmate the Russian fleet completely without having to increase the English squadron. It was therefore plainly to the interest of England to seek an alliance with Japan, just as much as it was to our interest to forestall such an eventuality by a friendly understanding with Japan. Of course, a third combination of forces would have been quite possible and desirable in the interests of the solidarity of European Powers, which had been for years considered, and even more or less practised, as the best policy in regard to Japan. But at that time anti-Russian feeling in England was just as strong as anti-English feeling was in Russia, and such a combination was not to be thought of, or, as my old friend and colleague, Mr. de Staal, then our Ambassador in London, wrote to me, " anyone who would have proposed it would have been considered a mad-man in England as well as in Russia."

Finally—this being the immediate object of the memorandum—I directed a broadside of the heaviest and most unanswerable arguments against the War Department's plan of the organization of a Korean Army by a body of



one hundred and twenty Russian officers as instructors, insisting in plain and precise terms on the urgent necessity of totally abandoning this plan if we desired to avoid an armed conflict with Japan.

In conclusion, I advocated a friendly understanding with Japan as well as with China, which would be the best guarantee of a solid and lasting peace.

I might mention an incident that for a moment interrupted my work on this memorandum. One afternoon, whilst I was busy writing, I received the unexpected visit of Mr. Motono, who was then Chargé d'Affaires of Japan, and who later as Baron Motono became Minister and then Ambassador at St. Petersburg and ended his life as Minister of Foreign Affairs in Japan. I had never before met this young, distinguished and very able Japanese diplomat, who was destined to play subsequently such an important part in the development of the relations between our two countries. He had graduated from the University of Paris, and addressed me in the purest French, apologizing for his intrusion, and explaining that only the gravest of reasons could have caused him to invade my privacy. He was under orders from his Government to try by all means accessible to him to ascertain under what approximate conditions Russia would be willing to come to a friendly understanding with Japan in regard to Korea. He had been unable to elicit from anyone in authority anything but the vaguest assurances of goodwill, and now, in despair, had come to me as the newly appointed Minister to Japan, in the hope that I might be able and willing to aid his endeavours to bring about such an understanding.

He spoke with great warmth and apparent feeling, of the sincerity of which I had no reason to doubt, from what I had heard of his personal disposition. Under the circumstances, I was, however, unable to give him more than the same vague assurances he had received elsewhere. Nineteen years later, in the third year of the war, when he was Ambassador to Russia, I reminded him of this meeting and said that now I could tell him—what I was not in a position to do then—that he had been preaching to a man who needed no conversion.

“ Well,” said Baron Motono, “ if we had succeeded then

in our efforts, we certainly should have prevented the war between our two countries; but, after all, it was perhaps better that the war should have been fought out. We have learned to know each other!"—a reflection which could be interpreted in a far from flattering sense.

The contents of my memorandum, although strictly secret, had leaked out through the lower personnel of the Foreign Department, and I was dubbed a "pro-Japanese"—the term "pacifist" not having yet come into use—not to be trusted with the flag of his country, and so on.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs took, however, a different view of my modest efforts in the cause of peace. Count Mouravieff, with all his superficial levity, was shrewd enough to realize the risk of exposing the country to the danger of serious complications in the very beginning of his career as Minister, and he also had sufficient decision to act resolutely and without delay. He sent for me and told me frankly that, although he had long felt that in our proceedings in Korea we were treading on very dangerous ground, he had not hitherto had at his command the weighty arguments needed to combat the War Department's plans; that he had made up his mind to try his best to defeat these plans, and that he intended to submit my memorandum to the Emperor, but only with my consent. "You must know," he said, "that most of your arguments run counter to the favourite conceptions of the Emperor, and, what is perhaps more important, to those of the all-powerful Minister of Finance, Witte." The latter assertion I had no means of verifying, not having had at the time the honour of personal acquaintance with that great statesman.

The very next day Count Mouravieff had his audience with the Emperor at Tsarskoe Selo, and on his return told me with visible satisfaction that he had carried the day triumphantly, that the plan of the organization of a Korean army had been definitely abandoned, but that the struggle had been long and hard, and that perhaps his most effective argument had been the following:—

He had said that, being quite new to that part of the business of the Foreign Department dealing with the affairs of the Far East, he could not pretend himself to any thorough knowledge of these affairs, and therefore considered it his

bounden duty to listen to those who were entitled to speak of them with the authority of long experience acquired on the spot, and that the opinions expressed in the memorandum were those of a man whose sincerity could not be questioned, since he had been warned that most of his opinions were opposed to his Sovereign's views, and he had unhesitatingly consented to his memorandum being submitted to His Majesty at the risk of incurring the Imperial displeasure.

Some days later I had a farewell audience with the Emperor, preparatory to my departure for my new destination. His Majesty received me most graciously and engaged me in a conversation on a variety of subjects, but never said a word about my memorandum—which had been returned to the Foreign Department with the Imperial annotation, "Excellently written"—and, in fact, never even mentioned the name of the country to which he had accredited me as his representative.

I joined my wife and daughter in Paris, and as it was summer time, we decided to go by way of America instead of taking the southern route by the Indian Ocean. Arrived in New York, I made up my mind to try this time a new transcontinental route, instead of resorting again to the "Old Reliable" Union Pacific and Central Pacific, and engaged passage for our party over the Canadian Pacific Railway to Vancouver, and thence in the *Empress of India* to Yokohama.

Some one of my friends had given me in Paris a card of introduction to Sir William Van Horne, who was then president of the Canadian Pacific Railway. I had put it away in my travelling bag and had quite forgotten all about it. At Montreal I accidentally came across it, and it occurred to me to look up in the Montreal directory the residence of Sir William Van Horne and to call on him, hoping to find him at home, as it was Sunday. In this, however, I was disappointed. But later in the day I found at our hotel Sir William Van Horne's card, on which he had written that he had come to tell me that he would place at my disposal a private car for the voyage to Vancouver, and asked me to let him know when I intended to start. Of course, I at once returned to his house to thank him for



his quite overwhelming kindness and courtesy, and to say that my arrangements for the journey had already been settled in New York. This time I found him at home, and had a long and most interesting talk with him on the question of the land grants in connection with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, a question I was greatly interested in, as our Government was then building the Trans-Siberian Railway, and conditions in Canada and Siberia being in many respects similar, I had intended to avail myself of my passage through the Dominion to collect some information on the way this land question had been dealt with by the Canadian Government as well as by the Railway Company. Sir William himself was a most interesting personality, one of those men who do things, men of great intelligence, untiring energy and unerring business acumen, to whom such unlimited opportunities are open on this happy, not yet overcrowded continent.

Unfortunately our Government dealt with the land question on principles which were, one might say, almost the direct opposite to those which had guided the Dominion Government.

In spite of my protestations, Sir William Van Horne insisted on my acceptance of his offer of a private car, and moreover insisted on my not postponing our departure when I had learned from him that the Japanese Imperial Prince, Arisugawa, was to travel on the same train in another private car, which naturally would increase the weight of the train to some extent and quite unprofitably to the Company. Sir William laughingly said that express trains on his railroad would never balk at hitching up a couple of extra private cars, least of all for such illustrious and distinguished guests. So we travelled in regal state, and indulged for a short week the illusion of belonging to the happy class of railroad presidents.

Our travelling companion in the next car, Prince Arisugawa, I had the honour of knowing in Japan years before, when His Imperial Highness was quite a young naval officer just promoted from cadetship. The Prince had been on a visit to the British Court, where he had attended the festivities in connection with the Queen's Jubilee as representative of the Emperor of Japan.



After a few days at Vancouver, we embarked for Yokohama, which we reached in twelve days, a vast improvement on my previous crossings of the Pacific between Japan and San Francisco, which had taken from twenty-two to as many as twenty-eight days.

## CHAPTER XVII

Arrival in Japan—Resignation of Count Okuma—Baron Nissi appointed to succeed him—Resignation of the Matsukata Cabinet—Marquis Ito, Prime Minister—Military mission to Korea—A young Prince—Occupation of Port Arthur—A Japanese offer—The Rosen-Nissi Convention—Visit of Grand Duke Cyril.

WE arrived in Japan in August 1897, and established ourselves in the very comfortable Legation building at Tokio. Mr. Speyer, who as First Secretary had been in charge of the Legation until my arrival, took his departure for Korea, where he had been appointed Diplomatic Agent, and for some time I had to await the arrival of the new First and Second Secretaries, Mr. Poklevski-Koziell and Mr. Andreeff. They came by the next steamer from Vancouver, and both proved as valuable as assistants and co-workers as they endeared themselves to us as friends. Mr. Poklevski-Koziell, who was our Minister to Roumania, is at present, as far as I know, either at Yassy or at Bucharest, and therefore safe, but what became of Mr. Andreeff I do not know. When we fled from the doomed capital of what was once the Empire of Russia, he was in Moscow, like some of my dearest friends, of whose fate I am in total ignorance.

Shortly after their arrival I had an interview with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Okuma, when he acquainted me with the startling fact that some seven or eight Russian officers had arrived at Seoul to act as instructors of the Korean Army, in spite of the assurances that had been officially given to the Japanese Minister in St. Petersburg, Count (then Mr.) Hayashi, that no steps whatever would be taken in regard to Korean affairs before my arrival in Tokio and the conclusion of a friendly agreement which I was to negotiate with the Japanese Government. Count Okuma pointed out that he fully realized that the arrival

in Korea of these seven or eight officers could not in itself constitute a serious menace to Japanese interests in that country, but that, besides being a violation of assurances freely given, it would be interpreted by public opinion as a symptom of ulterior and more or less aggressive intentions entertained by Russia. I could only assure him that at the time of my departure from St. Petersburg there had been no intention whatever of sending officers to Korea as instructors to the Korean Army, that the fact of their arrival at Seoul was a complete surprise to me, and that I would immediately take steps to clear up the matter.

As soon as I returned to the Legation after this rather painful interview I drew up a most vigorous protest, in terms which made Mr. Poklevski, who had to put it into cipher for transmission by cable, ask me jokingly whether I had made up my mind to return to Russia so soon after my arrival in Japan. I regret not to be able to reproduce here the text of this telegram as well as of the very non-committal reply I received after the delay usual in embarrassing circumstances. In this connection I must mention that in our precipitate flight from Russia I had to leave behind all my personal belongings, including my private archives, books and notes, etc., and having to rely exclusively on my memory, I must crave indulgence for any inaccuracies, especially as to dates, which may unavoidably creep into my narrative.

Before I received the expected reply from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Count Okuma had resigned, and his place had been taken by Baron Nissi, an old friend of mine whom I had known in St. Petersburg as a student at the University, later as Secretary of the Legation, and finally as Minister. Whether Count Okuma's resignation had anything to do with this particular incident I cannot say, although it may well have been the case. At any rate the matter was allowed to drop, and shortly afterwards the Matsukata Ministry, of which he had been a member, went out of office and was replaced by a Cabinet under the presidency of Marquis Ito, Baron Nissi remaining in the new Cabinet as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

I had, of course, an inkling of what had happened at St. Petersburg in connection with this affair, but I had my

surmises confirmed only on my return to Russia three years later. I have already related how Count Mouravieff had obtained the definite abandonment of the War Department's plan to organize a Korean Army with Russian officers. I had left for my new post under the impression that the matter had been definitely settled. Count Mouravieff's triumph over his colleague of the War Department proved, however, short-lived and not as complete as he had hoped. The latter seems to have felt it necessary, in order to "save his face"—as the Chinese have it—to save from the wreck of his original grandiose plan at least some little part, and he obtained the Emperor's consent to the despatch of the above-mentioned seven or eight officers as "military advisers" to the Korean Government, presumably under the plea that the presence at Seoul of such a small number of Russian officers could not give any offence to the Japanese.

Count Mouravieff, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, was placed in a most embarrassing and undignified position when he was approached by the Japanese Minister with a protest and demand of explanations. This is how Count Hayashi, in his *Secret Memoirs*, describes his interview: "At first Count Mouravieff had objected that 'this had happened under his predecessor and that he had had nothing to do with it,' and finally, after being told that it was a violation of a previous agreement between the two Governments, he had said: 'What I mean is that we have sent these officers to Korea and we cannot recall them immediately. As a matter of fact, we were to have increased their number, but we will not send any more. We will correct the matter and make amends to you, for it is, as you consider it, a violation of the agreement. But we must have some further time for the matter to be settled in.' " As a matter of fact, these officers, as well as our "financial adviser," Mr. Alexieff, were withdrawn in the following spring after our occupation of Port Arthur.

Shortly before the resignation of the Matsukata Cabinet an incident occurred which throws some light on the mentality of new Japan, by showing, in a small matter of social etiquette, to what extent the deep-rooted, traditional feudal feeling had survived the abolition of the feudal system.



A high functionary of the Imperial Court, Mr. Nagasaki, whom I had known years before when I was in Japan as Chargé d'Affaires, came to see me in his capacity of member of the Satsuma clan (one of the two most powerful clans, the other being the clan of Choshiu), to whom the Prime Minister, Count Matsukata, likewise belonged, with the following explanation: When the Tsarevitch, the heir to the throne of Russia, came to Japan he paid a visit to the Prince of Satsuma at his capital, Kagoshima, in the island of Kiu-Siu, and ever since the old Prince had considered it a duty of his house to entertain the friendliest relations with Russia, and had solemnly enjoined this duty on his son and heir, at the time of his father's death a mere child. The guardians of the young Prince, one of whom was Count Matsukata, had decided that, having reached the age of nine years (if I remember rightly), it was time for him to demonstrate his obedience to his parent's wishes, and to pay his respects to the new representative of Russia. Mr. Nagasaki asked me whether and when it would be convenient for me to receive the Prince. I told him, of course, that I should be delighted to make the acquaintance of the young chieftain of his clan, and suggested, the Prince being still a mere child, that he might come with one of his guardians to lunch with us quite informally, *en famille*, any day it suited his convenience. Mr. Nagasaki returned the next day to inform me that the Prince was delighted to accept my invitation, and would be accompanied by the Prime Minister, Count Matsukata, his chief guardian.

At the appointed hour a state carriage drew up at the door, containing the Prime Minister, and by his side, in the seat of honour at his right, the young Prince. On alighting from the carriage, Count Matsukata, with every show of respect, motioned him to enter the door first. I met the boy Prince in the hall and welcomed him, of course, with the greatest cordiality, without waiting for a formal introduction. But noticing the very deferential attitude of the Prime Minister towards his young ward, I asked Mr. Nagasaki, who was one of our guests, what place I should assign to the young Prince at the dinner-table. He replied at once that Count Matsukata would be much gratified if

I placed the Prince in the seat of honour to the right of the hostess and himself to her left, as he had come, not as Prime Minister, but as one of the guardians to accompany the chieftain of his clan. Nothing could have exceeded the high-bred ease and perfect tact, allied to a most winning self-conscious childish dignity, with which the charming little boy Prince went through a social function which could not possibly have afforded him much entertainment.

The fall of the Matsukata Ministry took place, as far as I can now remember, in September 1897, about a month after our arrival in Japan, and it so happened that we had sent out invitations to our first official dinner to the members of the Cabinet, when a couple of days later the Ministry resigned and was immediately replaced by a Cabinet headed by Marquis Ito. To avoid the appearance of demonstratively feasting the fallen Ministry, we took the unusual course of including in our invitations their successors as well. Under the circumstances, when political excitement in connection with our attitude towards Korea was running rather high, a similar course might have been not only unusual, but even risky anywhere else but in a country where the practice of smiling self-control in the face of the most trying and adverse conditions is not only a matter of good breeding, but has become, so to speak, a second nature of the people through centuries of training in the art. I am bound to say that we had no reason to regret having risked the success of our first diplomatic dinner in reliance on our guests' high breeding, as well as skill in camouflaging their sentiments.

In spite of Marquis Ito and his associates such as Count Inouyé and Baron Nissi, being known to favour a friendly understanding with Russia, suspicion of our plans in regard to Korea was rife, even in well-informed circles. It was, moreover, not quite groundless, and was kept alive and intensified by the noisy activity of our ambitious diplomatic and financial representatives. Perhaps even more so by the proceedings of our naval authorities in connection with the purchase of large plots of ground in places like Fusan and Mozampo, the erection of hospital buildings, the frequent visits to these ports of our Pacific squadron, and similar gestures suggestive of intentions on our part to a

possible acquisition of some point on the Korean coast as a naval station. That such intentions were indeed vaguely entertained by our naval authorities, whose favourite dream was the acquisition of Mozampo, I knew but too well, and had repeatedly warned the Government that any such attempt would unavoidably lead to an armed conflict with Japan, for which, as far as I could judge, we were not prepared at all, and which every consideration of prudence and foresight commanded us to avoid.

My personal relations with individual members of the Ito Cabinet were of the friendliest character. However, I could not but notice that the strain on the official relations between our Governments was becoming more and more pronounced, when an event occurred which, although it increased popular excitement against Russia, nevertheless produced a marked *détente* in the situation as far as the attitude of the Japanese Government was concerned. That event was the occupation of Port Arthur by Russia. The apparent inconsistency of this assertion of mine—by the way, confirmed by subsequent events—renders it necessary for me to enter upon some explanations as to the reasoning upon which it was based. The occupation by Russia of such an important point, which she had but two years before compelled Japan to evacuate after its conquest in a victorious campaign, could not but cause a grievous hurt to Japanese national feeling, and was therefore apt to lead to most serious consequences. That weighty apprehensions in this respect were entertained in Government circles in St. Petersburg I learned from a private letter of my friend Admiral Tirtoff, the head of the Naval Department, who had been entirely opposed, like all the other Ministers, to this plan of action, the sole originator of which had been Count Mouravieff, with the support of the Emperor. The Admiral expressed his warmest sympathy with me in the painful position in which he thought I must find myself placed in having to defend such a bad cause. I was able to reply that, on the contrary, my position, strange as it might seem, had been rendered very much easier for the following reason: popular excitement on account of our occupation of Port Arthur had unquestionably increased considerably, as our action was acutely felt as a painful



wound to the nation's pride, but on the other hand, the Japanese Government seemed to take a less sentimental and more practical view of the situation. They seemed to reason in this way: Russia evidently needs an ice-free port; she has been all the time on the look-out for such a port on the coast of Korea, where we can never allow her to establish herself, as that would mean a perpetual menace to our safety; now she has secured an ice-free port far nearer to and far more accessible from her own Siberian possessions, and we may therefore hope that henceforth she will abandon her aggressive plans in Korea. I had barely despatched my letter to the Admiral, in which I incidentally called his attention to some of the proceedings of our own naval authorities on the Korean coast which were far more likely to get us into trouble with the Japanese—a prediction which, by the way, was destined to be verified in the following year—when I received an authentic confirmation of the views I had attributed to the Japanese Government.

In the course of one of my usual weekly interviews with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Baron Nissi spoke with great warmth of his earnest desire to bring about a complete and truly friendly understanding with Russia. He said that hitherto the only bone of contention had been Korea, evidently on account of our need of an ice-free port, the acquisition of which seemed to have been the aim of our aggressive policy in that country, and that now, since we had acquired such a port in Manchuria, Korea need no longer be a cause of friction between two countries whose interests did not come in conflict anywhere else. And, finally, he asked me how it would do if we concluded an agreement on some such basis as a reciprocal engagement to refrain from any interference with each other's policy, Russia's in Manchuria and Japan's in Korea. I replied at once that I entirely agreed with him, and that, if what he had said was to be considered as a formal proposal, I would thank him to let me have it in writing, and I would gladly transmit it by cable to St. Petersburg, and do the best I could to press its acceptance on my Government.

“Very well,” said he, “I will submit the matter to the Cabinet this very afternoon, and you shall have our proposal in writing this evening.”



Baron Nissi kept his word, and in the evening I received the proposal in writing, accompanied by a personal letter in Russian, of which language the Baron had a perfect command, having completed his studies at the University of St. Petersburg. In this letter he expressed the fervent hope that the Japanese proposal would be favourably received by our Government, and that its acceptance would eliminate all possible causes of friction between Russia and Japan. The official proposal was in the shape of a brief *note verbale*, in which the Japanese Government declared its willingness to consider Manchuria with its littoral as being entirely outside the sphere of Japanese interests, provided the Russian Government was prepared to make the same declaration in regard to Korea. The originals of both these documents—the *note verbale*, as well as Baron Nissi's personal letter to me—were, of course, duly forwarded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at St. Petersburg. At the same time I transmitted to Count Mouravieff by cable the full text of the Japanese proposal, warmly advocating its immediate and unreserved acceptance as the best means of safeguarding our interests in the Far East. The reply suffered the usual delay, which, however, in this case was justified by the importance of the decision to be taken, which implied a definite break with our vacillating and, after all, really aimless policy in regard to Korea, in which we had been muddling along with no other result than that of straining our relations with Japan, almost to the breaking-point. But when the reply finally came in the shape of a cipher telegram from Count Mouravieff, its purport proved bitterly disappointing to me no less than to Baron Nissi. Its exact wording I cannot now remember, but its precise meaning was that the Russian Government took note with great satisfaction of the Japanese Government's declaration that it considered Manchuria with its littoral as being entirely outside the sphere of Japanese interests, but that it could not make a similar declaration in regard to Korea. When I read to Baron Nissi the text of Count Mouravieff's reply, he merely smiled sarcastically and said regretfully that it was plain that nothing further could be said or done about it, and the matter was allowed to drop. The idea of such an understanding was, however, not quite

abandoned by the Japanese Government. It was taken up two years later by some Japanese statesmen under circumstances to which I shall have to refer later, and finally by myself on the very eve of our rupture with Japan, as a last forlorn hope of preventing the outbreak of a war which I felt sure would end in disaster to us.

In the meantime it was felt by both Governments that something had to be done in order to allay the growing popular excitement in Japan in regard to Korean affairs, and I was empowered to begin negotiations with the Japanese Government on the subject, which resulted in April 1898 in a rather lame and pointless convention known as the Rosen-Nissi, or Nissi-Rosen, Convention. It stated in substance that both countries recognized the sovereignty and entire independence of Korea, and pledged themselves not to interfere in her internal affairs, Russia agreeing not to interfere with the development of the commercial and industrial relations between Japan and Korea, and both countries agreeing not to send advisers to Korea without the consent of the other party to the convention.

As regards this agreement, I have just come across an interesting statement in Count Hayashi's (at the time Minister to Russia) *Secret Memoirs* that he had telegraphed to Tokio, "suggesting that a clause might be inserted in the proposed agreement to the effect that Russia and Japan should mutually agree to take over the military and financial advisership respectively." He seems to have apprehended that it would have been difficult to obtain from Russia the withdrawal of her military mission, whereas, in his opinion, it would have been much easier to insist on the withdrawal of our financial adviser and the substitution for him of a financial representative of Japan.

Such at it was, however, the convention served its purpose of allaying popular feeling for a while. In our Government circles a more optimistic view of the situation seemed to prevail. At any rate, early in the summer they thought it proper to instruct the Grand Duke Cyril (first cousin of the Emperor and next in order of succession to the throne after the Emperor's brother and the yet unborn Tsarevitch), who was serving as sub-lieutenant on one of our Pacific squadron's vessels, to proceed to Tokio on an official visit

to the Japanese Court. When I learned of it I suggested by telegraph to Count Mouravieff that the Grand Duke's visit had better be postponed for some months, as popular feeling in Japan was still such that the Japanese Government might feel embarrassed to undertake the responsibility for the Grand Duke's safety, remembering the attempt on the life of the Emperor Nicholas when as Tsarevitch he visited Japan, in spite of all the precautions taken to ensure his safety. No attention, however, was paid to my suggestion, and a couple of weeks later the cruiser *Russia*, with the Grand Duke on board, arrived at Yokohama. Precautions on a vast scale were taken to ensure the royal guest's safety, and after four or five days' sojourn, unmarred by any untoward incident, the Grand Duke took his departure.

During His Imperial Highness's stay in Tokio the usual round of official functions took place: a State banquet at the Palace, dinners at the palaces of some of the Princes, at the Legation, and so on. The young Grand Duke—I think he was in his twenty-first year—tall and slender, very handsome, a model of supreme distinction in his manners and bearing, produced everywhere the best impression, even my diplomatic colleagues who had to come down from their summer residences on the mountains into the sweltering heat of Tokio, and to put on their naphthalene-perfumed uniforms to present their respects to H.I.H., were unanimous in singing his praises. On the day of his arrival I had a long conversation with him and acquainted him fully with the political situation, its significant gravity, and the great importance for us of the maintenance of the friendliest relations with Japan. The Grand Duke listened with the greatest attention and interest, took in the situation at once, and conformed his behaviour to it with unerring tact. In short, his visit, to which I had been looking forward with some apprehension, turned out a complete and socially very marked success. So much so, that Prince Arisugawa made him promise that on the next visit of his ship to Yokohama he would come to spend some days with him and the Princess quite privately at their palace at Tokio, a pointedly intimate kind of hospitality such as had never yet been extended to any royal visitor by any member of the Imperial family.

On the part of the Japanese Court and Government everything was done to emphasize their desire to cultivate friendly relations with Russia. This much could hardly be said of our proceedings in Korea. Our military and financial "advisers" were, indeed, withdrawn from Seoul, but in a way which Count Hayashi, in his *Secret Memoirs*, characterizes as "clumsy," attributing, however, this "clumsiness" mainly to the behaviour of our representative at Seoul. It appears—according to Count Hayashi, whose truthfulness can hardly be doubted—that this young diplomat had become exceedingly insistent in some demand which he was pressing upon the Korean Government, and had threatened to withdraw both the military and financial advisers. Whereupon the Korean Ministers, experts in the game of playing on the rivalry between Russia and Japan, applied to the Japanese representative for advice in the embarrassing plight in which they found themselves. The latter slyly asked them whether they were really anxious to retain the services of these Russian advisers, and, upon their fervid protestations that such was by no means the case, advised them to let the Russian representative fulfil his threat. Judging from Count Hayashi's account, we lost, in the eyes of the Japanese, what little credit would have been due to us by prompt compliance with the spirit of the recently concluded Rosen-Nissi Convention. On the other hand, there was no cessation of the activities of our naval authorities on the coasts of Korea, which were the cause of increasing irritation until matters were finally brought to a crisis, which very near caused a rupture of diplomatic relations and resulted in my sudden recall and appointment to an insignificant post in Europe.



## CHAPTER XVIII

Fusan incident—Sudden appointment as Minister to Bavaria — Anglo-Japanese Alliance—The rise of Japan—The Shoguns—Departure for Russia via Canada and the United States.

It so happened, some time in the autumn of 1899, that a young naval officer belonging to one of our men-of-war—I believe to the flagship of Admiral Hildebrand, known in the Far East as Admiral Firebrand—had gone on shore at Fusan and got into some trouble in a tea-house in the Japanese concession. The police having been called in by the proprietress of the establishment, he being in civilian clothes and apparently unable to speak Japanese, was arrested and taken to the Japanese police station. After some detention, when his character as naval officer was duly established, he was taken back to his ship with some kind of apologies. These were the bare facts as I learned later.

In the meantime I received a cipher telegram from Count Mouravieff, in which he in very peremptory terms ordered me to demand immediate reparation for the outrage committed on a Russian naval officer, and to insist on the immediate punishment of the guilty officials—or words to that effect. I went immediately to see the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Viscount Aoki, who had replaced Baron Nissi when the Ito Ministry resigned and Viscount Katsura came in as Prime Minister. He was an experienced diplomat of moderate views and well disposed towards Russia. He showed great concern when I read to him the text of Count Mouravieff's telegram, whose peremptory tone visibly shocked him. He said that my communication was the first he had had about this affair, that he would immediately order an investigation, but that until a report had reached him he could not enter into any engagements as to reparation and punishment of guilty parties, if any. I

reported at once by telegraph to Count Mouravieff the substance of Viscount Aoki's reply. The next morning I received from Admiral Hildebrand a long telegram, half in the simple cipher of the Navy Department, which anybody could decipher, half in plain Russian, and couched in terms which could not but be most offensive to the Japanese Government. I had this telegram put into the Foreign Department's cipher, and forwarded it to Count Mouravieff along with another telegram in which I called his attention to the desirability of our naval authorities observing due reserve and discretion in their activities on the Korean coast. A day later I received a telegram from Count Mouravieff in which he informed me that the Emperor had been graciously pleased to appoint me his Minister at Munich, and that I was to request the usual agreement to the appointment of Mr. Iswolsky, hitherto Minister at Munich, as my successor. This unsolicited appointment to a post of much less political importance without an opportunity having been given me to decline, was, of course, meant in a punitive sense, and I could easily guess the source from which it must have originated. My personal discomfiture, however, was capable of being interpreted in another sense, and that is what actually appeared to have been the case. I addressed a brief note to Viscount Aoki, informing him of my transfer to another post, and requesting the Japanese Government's agreement to the appointment of my successor. The same evening I received from him a private and very cordial letter of regret, evidently written under the impression that my sudden transfer, although coupled with the appointment of a successor and therefore not having the character of demonstrative withdrawal of a diplomatic representative of ministerial rank, might mean something more than a mere change of persons at the head of our Legation.

The following day the news of my supposed recall leaked out in financial circles, where it was probably interpreted as an ominous symptom of strained relations between the two Governments, and caused a mild panic on the Stock Exchange. The result was that a few days later Viscount Aoki informed me that the Japanese Minister at St. Petersburg had had a satisfactory interview with Count Moura-

vielf and that it had been agreed to let the matter drop. In the meantime I received a telegram informing me that my successor would reach Tokio in about six months and ordering me to await there his arrival. Later on, when I had arrived at St. Petersburg, I learned at the Foreign Office that my communication of Admiral Hildebrand's telegram had opened their eyes to the real cause of trouble, and convinced them that the complaints which the naval authorities had made of my failure to support their claims with sufficient vigour were groundless, but that my communication had been received after the telegram announcing my transfer to Munich had already been despatched. This time the danger of a rupture with Japan had luckily blown over, mainly, I suppose, because the Japanese Government were not yet sufficiently prepared for it as they were five years later. This apparently unimportant incident illustrates the extreme delicacy of the situation, which should have enjoined on us the necessity of handling our relations with Japan with the greatest care, and of not suffering our other subordinate authorities to endanger these relations by high-handed disregard of Japanese susceptibilities.

We have seen how the Japanese Government, in spite of the wound inflicted on their national pride by our having appropriated to ourselves the chief fruit of the victory over China, did not hesitate to approach us with a formal offer of a friendly understanding. And in spite of its having been disdainfully declined by us, the idea of such an understanding was never entirely abandoned up to the very last moment before the final rupture. It stands to reason, of course, that any particular sympathy for Russia had nothing whatever to do with an attitude, the explanation of which has to be looked for in the general situation created by the events of the recent past, and in the chief aim which Japanese policy was steadily keeping in view.

This aim was the establishment of a protectorate over, and ultimately, the eventual conquest and annexation of Korea. But, leaving aside vanquished and helpless China, the realization of this aim was bound to encounter opposition from both Russia and Great Britain, and, therefore, could not be approached without a previous friendly under-

standing with one or other of these Powers. An understanding with Russia must have appeared preferable, because, even if a foothold on the continent could be obtained, it would have remained a precarious one in the face of a hostile Russia, whose apparently enormous potential power had not yet been put to the test. But then an attempt at such an understanding had just failed, and the possible success of a renewed one would have appeared doubtful in view of the aggressive policy in Korea which Russia seemed unwilling to abandon. The other alternative—an understanding with Great Britain—was favoured by some of the statesmen of the younger generation, and was energetically advocated by Count Hayashi, who had been transferred from the post of St. Petersburg to that of London. The only question was whether Japan had any inducement to offer to Great Britain that could compare in importance with the advantages Russia could afford to grant as price of an alliance with Great Britain which would have reduced Japan to impotence in the Far East. Doubts, and even apprehensions, in this regard seemed to have suggested themselves to Count Hayashi himself. They do as much honour to his sagacity and grasp of the political situation as their groundlessness testifies to the absence of these same qualities in the functionaries who in succession stood at the head of our Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They were, besides, the more justified as, since the outbreak of the Boer War, when Great Britain found herself confronted by a hostile world, it would have been of far greater advantage to her to break the phalanx of her continental enemies by an understanding with Russia than to seek the shadowy benefits of an alliance with Japan, just as it would have been the part of wisdom for Russia to have seized this opportunity to terminate her long rivalry with Great Britain by a definite friendly understanding, and thus to forestall the formation of a political combination most undesirable to her interests in the Far East.

Nothing daunted by such doubts or apprehensions, Count Hayashi held on to his idea, and was at last authorized to begin negotiations with the British Government for the conclusion of a formal treaty of alliance. His



overtures, tentatively presented at first as merely personal views regarding the possible future development of Anglo-Japanese relations, met at once with a responsive reception from Lord Lansdowne, a proof of the astuteness and clear insight with which he had gauged the political situation in Europe. After prolonged negotiations, during which a participation of Germany in the future combination seems to have been for a while contemplated and soon entirely eliminated, Count Hayashi had the satisfaction of signing in November 1901 the treaty of alliance with Great Britain, which was published in February 1902 and has ever since remained the pivot of Japan's foreign policy. This result, however, was not reached without a fruitless attempt to bring about an understanding with Russia, and Marquis Ito was sent to this end on a confidential mission to St. Petersburg. Why such a step was taken at the very moment when the treaty with Great Britain was a nearly accomplished fact is a question surrounded with considerable obscurity. It certainly disclosed the existence of divided counsels within the inner circle of the Japanese Government, and laid that Government open to the reproach of double dealing. However, the failure of Marquis Ito's mission extricated the Japanese Government from a situation which its success would have rendered exceedingly awkward. It also exonerated our Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was then Count Lamsdorff, from the blame which would have justly attached to him for having again, like his predecessor, Count Mouravieff, rejected the offer of an understanding on the perfectly acceptable basis of a free hand for Russia in Manchuria and a free hand for Japan in Korea.

I hope it will be distinctly understood that in discoursing at such length on the motives and considerations which might have guided the policy of the Japanese Government, I lay no claim to having been in the possession of exclusive knowledge as to the intentions of that Government, nor much less to those of the British Government. The deliberations and negotiations of the Japanese Government were naturally carried on under the veil of profound secrecy, and they related, moreover, mainly to a time when, occupying such posts as Munich and Athens, I was far removed

from the sphere of Far Eastern interests, and had no opportunities of keeping myself thoroughly posted as to the course of events and political conditions in that part of the world. All I knew, and was entirely convinced of, was that by our obstinacy in clinging to our vacillating but substantially aggressive policy in Korea, and in disdainfully declining every offer of a friendly understanding, we were deliberately pushing Japan into the arms of Great Britain, and in this way actively co-operating in the realization of a political combination obviously opposed to Russian interests. Those who are more deeply interested in the genesis of the Anglo-Japanese alliance and the negotiations which led up to its consummation, I can best refer to the English translation of the *Secret Memoirs of Count Tadasu Hayashi*, edited by A. M. Pooley, and published by G. P. Putnam's Sons in 1915.

It might not come amiss at this point, in connection with the brilliant success achieved by Japanese diplomacy in having effected an alliance with Great Britain in spite of that Power's traditional policy of avoidance of similar entanglements, to attempt to analyse the conditions that have made it possible for a nation that barely half a century ago had been not only a totally negligible, but even hardly known quantity, to rise, in spite of racial equality even now being denied her, to the proud position of one of the five surviving Great Powers who have undertaken to rule the destinies of mankind. It stands to reason that superiority of statesmanship, however real and incontestable, could not alone account for such a phenomenon. Granted the exceptionally high quality of Japanese statesmanship, there must have existed certain particularly favourable conditions which allowed that statesmanship the necessary scope for effective development. The first of these conditions, I think, was this—that the Japanese, with their ancient and refined culture, were the last comers to join the community of civilized Western nations. Their advent on the stage of terrestrial world politics was like the arrival of inhabitants of another planet gifted with acute powers of observation, unhampered by hereditary prejudices or preconceived ideas, unmoved by sentiments of traditional rivalry or hatred borne of centuries of strife

and struggle for supremacy, with no inherited friendships or enmities to indulge or cultivate—in short, with nothing to obscure the clearness of their vision or affect the soundness of their judgment. Another important advantage resulted from the constitution of the State and the organization of the Government, to which I have already referred in these pages. Above the frequently changing personnel of the ostensible parliamentary government, the real and permanent supreme power and the ultimate decision in all matters of serious importance rested with the so-called “Genro,” or “Elder Statesmen”; that is to say, with a small group of exceedingly able statesmen who had been the original creators of modern Japan and the very few eminent personages they would choose themselves to fill occasional vacancies in their body. This small but powerful and united group of statesmen was entirely independent and free to shape the policies of the country, quite irrespective of the changing currents of popular feeling, in accordance solely with the dictates of reason and the permanent interests of the State. It would be difficult to overrate the advantage these conditions gave the leading statesmen of Japan in their dealings with statesmen not so fortunately situated. Japan was enabled to pursue with unvarying consistency a line of policy laid down in strict conformity with aims always practically attainable and carefully adjusted to the needs and resources of the country, a policy which has raised her to an eminence far beyond the most ambitious dreams of the reformers who broke down the barriers of her age-long isolation.

But after this long digression it is time to resume the course of my narrative. The end of the year 1899, which had seen the outbreak of the Boer War, witnessed also the beginning of very serious troubles in China in connection with the so-called “Boxer” movement, whose ominous growth during the first four months of 1900 seemed to have been treated with some levity, until after the murder of the German Minister, a Japanese official and some others. It culminated in the siege and investment of the Legation quarter at Peking and lasted until Peking was taken by the allied troops. Of the events following upon the Boxer rising, our participation in the Peking campaign, the occu-



pation of Manchuria and so forth, I shall treat later on in my narrative.

At about the time when the siege of the Legation quarter at Peking began, we left the Legation at Tokio and moved into the Grand Hotel at Yokohama in expectation of the arrival of my successor, Mr. Iswolsky, who, with his family, was coming by way of Siberia. Having got rid of the cares of office, and my wife of her social duties at the capital, we both enjoyed the quiet life. Many people used to come to take their meals at the hotel, which was reputed to have an excellent *chef*. One day I noticed in the dining-room a group of Japanese gentlemen, and among them no less a personage than Prince Tokugawa, who had been the last of the Shoguns and had voluntarily given up his throne to the Mikado. There he was—he who had been surrounded with almost divine worship, and been considered by foreign Sovereigns as an equal, as the all-powerful “temporal Emperor” of Japan (the Mikado being supposed to have been merely the “spiritual Emperor”)—there he was in a grey business suit, his bowler hat left in the cloak-room, eating his currie and rice with perfect contentment. *Sic transit gloria mundi*. It must be remembered, however, that from the very moment that Prince Tokugawa had succeeded in 1866 to the deceased Shogun Iemochi as fifteenth and last Shogun, he had revealed himself as an ardent advocate of progress. He it was who, on receipt of a memorial from one of the feudatories urging him to restore the administration to the Emperor in order that the nation might be united, called together the other feudatories, and informed them of his resolve to adopt the advice of the memorialist, and on the following day, October 14, 1867, tendered to the Emperor his resignation, which was formally accepted on December 15th of the same year. This latter date, therefore, should properly be considered as marking the birth of new Japan, as well as the beginning of the reign of the Emperor Mutsu Hito, who was then in his fifteenth year and who, before he died in 1912, saw his country recognized as one of the Great Powers of the world. Prince Tokugawa’s resignation certainly deserves to rank among the memorable events of history as a voluntary sacrifice of supreme power by a ruler in the interests of



his nation. Some of his adherents, however, continued for some time the struggle against the new regime. Among them, Admiral Enomoto, the commander of the late Shogun's fleet, is said to have attempted to establish a republic in the island of Yezo, whither he had retired with the warships under his command. A few years later I met the same Admiral Enomoto as Minister at St. Petersburg. He later became Minister of Education and Minister of the Navy, and was raised to the dignity of Viscount and member of the House of Peers. The career of this prominent adherent of the defunct regime exemplifies the spirit in which the great reform was carried out by the new Government, and was loyally accepted by its former opponents. If one reflects that this reform meant a social upheaval of unequalled magnitude, the total abolition of feudalism which had been for centuries the armature of the social fabric and the spirit of which had profoundly affected the mentality of the nation, one cannot help marvelling at the comparatively painless ease with which this great change was achieved. In a sense it was a truly democratic revolution. Although the revolt against the Shogunate was patronized by two of the greatest and most powerful feudatories, the Princes of Satsuma and Choshu, the feudal chiefs themselves had very little to do with the consummation of the great change which was conceived and accomplished chiefly by their vassals, "samurai" of inferior grade. According to Brinkley's *History of the Japanese People*, the men who conceived and realized the great revolution "numbered fifty-five in all, and of those only thirteen were aristocrats, namely, five feudal barons and eight Court nobles, and the average age of these fifty-five did not exceed thirty years." A small group of young men not only conceived and achieved the revolution, but undertook to build up a new social fabric on principles which entailed a break from deep-rooted traditions. Their success was complete, perhaps even beyond their own expectations. Moreover, it was obtained without bringing the country near to a state of even temporary chaos. Beyond their unswerving conviction of the necessity of the assimilation of Western civilization and their unshakable faith in the future of their country, they had nothing to rely on

but the circumstance that the human material they had to deal with was possessed of an ardent patriotism bred by centuries of seclusion from the outer world. These qualities rendered the minds of the Japanese people not only open to the comprehension of the superiority of Western civilization, but also eager for its assimilation as soon as it was realized that such assimilation was needed in order to hold their own against foreign nations, the contact with whom could no longer be avoided.

History, I believe, will not fail to recognize the grandeur of their achievement, nor deny them the tribute of admiration which is their due.

## CHAPTER XIX

Mr. Iswolsky—The *Daily Mail* and the Peking Legations—Arrive at St. Petersburg—The new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Lamsdorff—His character—Count Witte—Departure for Munich—The Prince Regent—King Ludwig II—The "Octoberfest"—Marriage of the Count of Flanders, present King of the Belgians, to Duchess Elizabeth of Bavaria—Unpopularity of Kaiser William—His tactlessness—Appointed Minister to Greece.

My successor, Mr. Iswolsky, who six years later was to become Minister of Foreign Affairs, arrived with his family at the end of June. As the fates would have it, Mr. Iswolsky and I were destined to succeed each other in different posts. I had succeeded him as Chargé d'Affaires at Washington in 1886; then he succeeded me as Minister to Serbia in 1897, and now he succeeded me again in Japan, and I succeeded him at Munich, and three years later I was to succeed him a last time on my reappointment as Minister at Tokio nine months before the outbreak of the war. I had first made his acquaintance when he was still at school at the Imperial Lyceum at St. Petersburg. We met accidentally in the train between Moscow and St. Petersburg and spent half a night in animated conversation. He impressed me as a gifted youth of great intelligence and, for his years, remarkably cultivated mind. In later years, although we were colleagues in the diplomatic service, we only met occasionally when home on leave or, as on this occasion, at some post abroad. He was by long odds the ablest man in our service. His solid erudition, his breadth of view, his profound understanding and thorough earnestness in the treatment of affairs of State, his liberal mind trained in the school of Western political thought, stamped him as—what had always been so sadly wanting in Russia—a real statesman in the European sense. The telegraph has recently announced his death, which occurred in Paris in August last. I am fulfilling a sad duty in paying homage to the memory of a distinguished

statesman and former colleague and chief, for whom I always entertained the highest regard, and with whom I shared many views, although we fundamentally disagreed on the subject of the policy the tragic collapse of which may have hastened his untimely end.

In the beginning of July a telegram was received at the Legation announcing the sudden death of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Mouravieff, but it was only when we reached New York that we learned of the appointment of his successor. When we sailed from Yokohama we were still ignorant of the fate of our unfortunate colleagues besieged by the "Boxers" in the Legation quarter at Peking, and we had almost given up hope of their being rescued in time to save them from starvation. After a very pleasant crossing we came in sight of land on the twelfth day after weighing anchor at Yokohama. We watched the pilot come on board, his pockets bulging out with newspapers which he took up to the bridge. A few minutes later the captain's steward brought me a newspaper, on top of the front page of which Captain Marshall had written in blue pencil these illuminating words: "All this is a d—d lie!" I guessed at once that it must be something relating to the siege of the Legations at Peking. It turned out to be a long telegram sent from the Shanghai correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, and reproduced *in extenso* in the Vancouver newspaper. It was a harrowing description of the events which had followed the taking of the Legation quarter at Peking by the Boxer forces, giving, among other horrors, a particularly detailed account of the tortures by which the unfortunate diplomats had been put to death. Particularly affecting was the story of the martyrdom of our Minister, Mr. Michael de Giers (at present happily safe and sound as Russian Ambassador in Rome), who was described as having been boiled alive in a large cauldron filled with oil and having up to his last breath been "confessing Christianity." As far as I remember, it was also stated that his secretaries, presumably not considered worthy of the honours of oil, were boiled to death in plain water. I sat in my deck chair immersed in the account of the dreadful happenings at Peking, when one of the missionaries, refugees from some mission station in China who had joined the steamer at Hong-Kong, came up and said that he noticed



how deeply I seemed to be moved by what I was reading, and he wanted to reassure me in regard to the fate of my friends, being convinced that there was not a word of truth in the whole story. I confessed that I had some doubts myself, but that I could not help being impressed by a story adorned with so many and such minute details. "That's just the very reason why you should disbelieve the whole story; plain, honest truth does not need so much adornment." This argument seemed convincing enough, the more so as it was based on the generally accepted belief in regard to the unadorned condition in which Truth is supposed to emerge from her well whenever she chooses to appear to mortal eyes—an appearance of which, by the way, she has been rather chary all these years. But the unscrupulous inventor of that sensational story may justly derive some journalistic pride from having caused a considerable stir all over the world—a species of pride which, let us hope, is not unaccompanied by some qualms of conscience upon reflection on the cruel and needless pain which similar journalistic achievements may inflict on tender hearts trembling for the fate of those dear to them.

In this connection I was told a story about the sister of one of our Legation staff at Peking who, after having read in the morning paper the famous telegram about the martyrdom of the Peking diplomats, started at once for the Foreign Department in the hope of learning some more reassuring news. Passing the Chinese Legation, she noticed at the door one of the attachés of that establishment, whereupon she jumped from her cab, made straight for the luckless Chinaman and began belabouring him with her umbrella, he, the while, taking his punishment like a gallant gentleman, only protesting his innocence in the few Russian words he could command. It strikes me that this particular Chinaman would have a reasonable claim for damages against the author of the fake telegram.

Arrived at St. Petersburg, I found that Count Lamsdorff, the Assistant Minister, had been appointed to succeed Count Mouravieff as Minister of Foreign Affairs, having reached at last the goal of his ambition. He was one of those inveterate bureaucrats whose whole life interest centres in their chancellerie, and to whom the outside world is known merely by

hearsay. A confirmed old bachelor, afflicted with an almost hysterical shyness, he had been leading the life of an anchorite in his apartment in the Foreign Office building and his chancellerie, entirely wrapped up in his archives. He had been, indeed, a very useful, hard-working, painstaking subordinate. That was evidently the part for which nature had fitted him, and which he would have filled to the end with great credit to himself and some benefit to his country. But a puny intellect, a narrow mind and a merely book and paper knowledge of men and things of the outer world obviously unfitted him for the part he was to play at a critical time in the country's history. That the Emperor's choice should have fallen on him was perhaps natural. He knew him to be a perfect gentleman, absolutely loyal and devoted to the Throne, and that for the last three years, as Count Mouravieff's assistant, he had been supplementing the almost incredible deficiencies of the latter's knowledge of affairs, and he liked his humble attitude of a mere instrument of his Sovereign's will. As misfortune would have it, Count Lamsdorff was also a humble instrument in the hands of a statesman, great in many respects, but possessed of rather crude conceptions of international politics and of the way of handling them, whose strong will frequently clashed with the Emperor's weak and vacillating will, without, however, being able to resist or dominate it. The result was a situation upon which the Japanese were able to base their calculations when they decided to run the risk of an open rupture with Russia. I have no doubt that if that great statesman—I mean Witte, of course—had had the sole direction of our policies, domestic as well as foreign, he would soon have found his way in the intricacies of international politics, a domain where, by occasional irresponsible interferences through the medium of a subservient lay figure, such as Count Lamsdorff, he was apt to play the part of a bull in a china shop. He would not only have prevented the outbreak of the war with Japan, but would also have averted the catastrophe which, with a statesman's vision, he foresaw. Through merciful death he was spared the cruel fate of all those of us who had shared his views, and who had to stand by in impotent rage seeing our unfortunate country being launched on the road to perdition and lastly pushed into the abyss of civil war and anarchy.

Count Lamsdorff received me with pompous graciousness, congratulated me on the official recognition of my services—I had been given a decoration—but did not seem to be greatly interested in what I might have had to say on the subject of Far Eastern politics. Having already expressed my views on this subject in my memorandum of March 1897, as well as in my dispatches from Japan, I did not attempt to press them upon him again in a brief interview. Any such endeavour on my part would, according to bureaucratic ethics, be held to be an encroachment on the province of my successor at Tokio, and I was convinced, moreover, that Mr. Iswolsky would very soon come to share these views and would not fail to take them up in his reports to the Foreign Department.

After a short stay at St. Petersburg and a farewell audience with the Emperor, in the course of which Japan was not even mentioned, we left for our new destination, Munich, by way of Warsaw and Vienna. The post of Munich being merely, so to speak, a post of courtesy, devoid of any business importance, we might have prolonged our stay at St. Petersburg for a couple of months but for our desire not to miss the celebrated "Octoberfest"—something like the national festival of Bavaria.

I shall not attempt to give a description of this beautiful and interesting town with its narrow streets and mediæval architecture. But when I look back these nineteen years and recall my first impressions of Munich it seems to me almost incredible—although I have seen with my own eyes what a pathetic wreck human madness can make of the magnificent capital of a once mighty empire—that this beautiful capital of all the arts and sciences, with its staid, laborious and well-disciplined population, should have become the theatre of "Spartacide" riots, sanguinary street fights and the installation of a "Soviet" Government, that insane device of Russian Bolshevism.

Shortly after my arrival I had my audience with the Prince Regent, Prince Luitpold, who had been governing Bavaria as Regent ever since his nephew King Ludwig II had been declared insane. After the King's mysterious death by drowning in the Stahremberg Lake, his brother, likewise mad and confined in one of his castles, had nominally



succeeded him on the throne. The Prince Regent was a very old man, but hale and hearty and a great chamois hunter, with the exquisite manners of a grand seigneur of the *ancien régime*. He governed his kingdom constitutionally with wisdom and discretion, and, as far as I could judge, to the entire satisfaction of his people, with whom he was fairly popular, though, strange to say, their enthusiastic love was still faithful to the memory of mad King Ludwig in spite of his having done everything to ruin the State by his insane extravagance and mania for building palaces and castles. At moving picture shows, when, at the close of the performances, the usual loyal presentments appeared on the screen, that of the Emperor William was always received in dead, though respectful, silence, that of the Regent greeted with perfunctory applause, but that of King Ludwig never failed to evoke outbursts of manifestly sincere enthusiasm.

We had not long to wait for the famous "Octoberfest." It takes place in a vast open space on the confines of the town in front of the colossal statue of Bavaria. A pavilion is erected in the centre for the Royal Family, the diplomatic body and the Ministers of State. That was where we were to be presented to the numerous Princes and Princesses of the Royal House, thus obviating separate audiences with every one of them. The centre of attraction for the masses seemed to be the arrival of the various princely turn-outs, which were greeted with graduated applause according to the degree of popularity of their owners. On this occasion the most enthusiastic applause fell to the lot of Prince Louis Ferdinand, a practising physician, and his wife, a Spanish Princess, who came in an old-world Spanish state coach drawn by a team of Spanish mules. The whole thing was a combination of country fair, cattle show and race meeting for the peasantry, who galloped along quite informally on a kind of primitive race track. The pervading atmosphere was one of cheery good nature sustained by copious libations of the famous Munich beer.

Munich is quite, or used to be, the centre of the German art world. Most of the noted painters and sculptors live and have their studios in what they like to call the "German Athens." The Prince Regent had acquired a wide popularity



in the world of artists and savants in his capital by paying periodical visits to the studios, not only of celebrated, but even of more or less obscure, painters and sculptors, and by the dinner invitations he used to shower on them and the scientific luminaries of the University. The fortune of the Royal House being greatly embarrassed through the financial follies of mad King Ludwig and part of the civil list serving to pay off his enormous debts, the Prince Regent, who personally was not rich, was allowed by the State a certain sum for daily dinners of a dozen or so covers to which he was in the habit of asking painters, sculptors or professors, the lists of his dinner guests being published in the paper the following day. In this way everyone would have at least once the honour of being the guest at the Royal table, and to have all of his friends apprised of the facts the next day.

Everything belonging to the Court was kept in perfect state in spite of the condition of the Royal finances, as we were able to observe when we were invited to witness in the chapel of the castle the ceremony of the marriage of the present King of the Belgians to the Duchess Elizabeth, daughter of the Duke Charles Theodore, the celebrated oculist, and sister of the Princess Rupprecht, since deceased. The diplomatic body was accommodated with seats in the choir, where we could watch the arrival of the procession headed by the Prince Regent and King Leopold of the Belgians. He had arrived from Brussels by special train just in time to be present at the ceremony, after which, not being apparently on good terms with Prince Luitpold, he left immediately so as not to be present at the formal wedding breakfast. At the close of the religious ceremony, a Court functionary placed us in the hall in a position from which we could see the procession descending one monumental staircase and mounting another leading to the apartments of the Royal Palace. When the young couple, handsome and radiantly happy, appeared at the head of the stairs, a hidden orchestra played softly Elsa's wedding march from *Lohengrin*, and as the procession, preceded by Court functionaries, the ladies' trains borne by pages in blue and white, moved slowly and silently down the stairs lined by stalwart men of the traditional bodyguard in mediæval costumes of blue and silver, and

shining armour—it was like a scene from fairyland in its poetic beauty.

It was my first experience of life in Germany, not counting the three weeks I had spent in Dr. Pagenstecher's clinic at Wiesbaden, and I was greatly interested in sensing the social and political atmosphere. Having merely a book or newspaper knowledge of life in North Germany, or rather Prussia, I had no criterion by which I could determine in what respect it differed from life in the southern part of the country where the population is perhaps of purer Teuton stock than the Prussians, Pomeranians or Mecklenburgers, who must have absorbed no small amount of admixture of the blood of the Slav aborigines. This may account for the differentiation in the characteristics in the two branches of the same nation. There is, however, one thing that strikes even a superficial observer, and that is the strong dislike Bavarians feel for their Prussian countrymen, a dislike they are at no pains to conceal. Nor was there much love lost between the Courts of Munich and of Berlin. The Wittelsbach Dynasty, reigning in Bavaria, counted among their ancestors wearers of the Imperial crown of the "Holy Roman Empire of German Nationality" when that crown was an elective one, and they were said to be inclined to look upon the Hohenzollerns as upstarts. The Emperor William was certainly not popular in Bavaria, for which he had mostly himself to blame. For instance, on one of his State visits to Munich, when asked to inscribe his name in the Golden Book of Royal Visitors at the City Hall, he had written above his signature the following sentence: "Suprema lex Regis voluntas." He evidently failed to realize that mediæval ideas of kingship might not please a people who for many decades had lived under a constitutional regime. And then again, an incident that occurred during my short stay in the Bavarian capital. The Lower House of the Bavarian Parliament had, for some reason, failed to vote an appropriation of a hundred thousand marks for a patriotic object—an addition to the building of the national museum or some similar object—whereupon the Emperor William had immediately sent a telegram to the Prince Regent expressing his profound indignation at the "unpatriotic" action of the Bavarian Chamber, and offering to place the required sum at the

Regent's disposal out of his own funds. This tactless offer, inspired evidently by the kindest intentions, naturally hurt the feelings of the legislators accused of want of patriotism, nor did the Prince Regent, and, for the matter of that, the Bavarian people, enjoy being treated as poor relations in need of charitable assistance. The Prince Regent was, however, able to reply immediately, thanking the Emperor for his kind intention and adding that one of the peers of his realm had already made good the deficiency. This little incident provoked no end of sarcastic comments in society and in the Press, and did not add to the Emperor's very limited popularity in the country.

Berlin being naturally the centre of the political life of united Germany, Munich might justly claim to be to some extent the capital of German art and letters and science. There seems to be something in the social atmosphere of Munich in which devotees of art and science find it easier to breathe than in the stifling air of the northern capital, where the military and bureaucratic elements were supreme. The same attraction and the same repulsion seemed to influence likewise the highest ranks of the German aristocracy, the so-called "mediatized" nobility, who, deprived by the Congress of Vienna of their sovereign powers, had been granted the right of equality of birth with actually reigning houses. Many of the leading families of the mediatized nobility had their town residences in Munich, adding lustre and distinction to the social life of the southern capital.

It would, however, be a mistake to conclude that the Governments and populations of South Germany would go, in what Germans call "particularism," as far as to entertain really separatistic tendencies. That was one of the erroneous impressions upon which were based the calculations of Napoleon III's diplomacy in opposing and trying to block the way of German unification, a policy which led to the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War.

As there was nothing in particular to do at Munich, and I was entitled to three months' leave of absence, we went to spend the rest of the winter and early spring on the shore of the Lake of Geneva near our former home at Vevey. For the coming summer we had rented a charming villa belonging to the father of the present Queen of the Belgians,

in the mountain country surrounding the beautiful Lake of Tegernsee. We had barely established ourselves there when I received a telegram from Count Lamsdorff asking me in most obliging terms whether I would accept the post of Athens which had just become vacant. This offer was evidently meant as a kind of reparation for my undeserved recall from Japan, because the Legation at Athens ranked in our service higher than the other Legations in Europe on account of the Queen of Greece being a Russian Grand Duchess. I could but accept it, therefore, in spite of the inconvenience and expense entailed by a new change of residence.

When I had my farewell audience with the Prince Regent, he expressed in most gracious terms his regret at our departure, but said that he was also sorry to find that of late the Legation at Munich seemed to have become in the eyes of our diplomacy merely a stepping-stone to something better. He had some reason, by the way, for being a little touchy on the subject of our diplomatic representation, as for a time it had been entirely abolished for motives of economy and had been re-established only at the request of Prince Bismarck, always most anxious to spare the susceptibilities of the Bavarian Court. He took pains, however, not to make us feel his displeasure, and came the next day to our hotel bringing with him a large photograph, which with true old-world gallantry he insisted on carrying upstairs himself to present it to my wife.



## CHAPTER XX

Departure for Athens—An extraordinary revolution—Queen Olga—King George—Venice.

ON arrival at St. Petersburg I found that I was not expected to join my new post before the return of the King, who was spending his usual summer vacation in Denmark and France, and whose arrival at Athens was not expected before the end of October. This left us plenty of time to go to Paris and attend to the complicated business of preparing for our removal to Athens, which included the necessity of completely furnishing from top to bottom the house which the Government was renting for the Legation.

We arrived at Athens in October, and went to the Hôtel Grande Bretagne, where we stayed until our departure in June of the following year, as our furniture had not arrived in time for us to take up our residence in the Legation building. However, mine host Lampsas and his amiable and accomplished wife, a French lady, made us very comfortable indeed, and we had no reason to regret not having been able to move into our own house. I am glad of the occasion to express here to this worthy couple my sincere gratitude for the kind attention they showed my wife and daughter when they returned to Athens in the second year of the Great War, after they had been obliged hurriedly to leave Paris, at the time of the threatening approach of the enemy to Compiègne.

The Hôtel Grande Bretagne stands in the Place de la Constitution, and from its windows one has a good view of the Royal Palace on the left and to the right, in the distance, of the rock of the Acropolis. As seen from my room in the hotel the Acropolis bears a striking resemblance to the profile of Gladstone, after Lord Byron the most popular Englishman, whose name will always be gratefully remembered

by the Greeks as that of the statesman who made restitution to Greece of the Ionian Islands, which for half a century—for their own good, be it said—had been under British rule.

A week or so after our arrival we were startled by the outbreak of something like a revolution on a small scale, provoked by the most extraordinary of causes and initiated by people whom one would least suspect of being inclined to organize a popular uprising for such a cause. The facts were as follows: Queen Olga, who was, as mentioned above, by birth a Russian Grand Duchess, a niece of the Emperor Alexander II, although most loyally attached to the country of her adoption, was nevertheless a great Russian patriot, and on that account rather unpopular in Greece. She was a most kindhearted woman and entirely devoted to all works of charity and especially to the care of the sick and wounded. During the Greco-Turkish War she had been a daily visitor to the military hospitals, and in trying to read the Gospels to the wounded soldiers she had noticed that the language of Holy Scripture, which was the classical ancient Greek, was quite unintelligible to the men. As there was no translation of the Bible into modern Greek in existence, the Queen determined to have such a translation made by duly qualified ecclesiastics and to have it published for the benefit of the masses of the people to whom ancient classical Greek is a closed book. She naturally consulted the Metropolitan Archbishop of Athens, who not only unreservedly approved the Queen's plan, but even, if I am not mistaken, actively supervised the translation. Apparently there was nothing in this work, undertaken exclusively in the interest of the people, that could have furnished the slightest ground for malevolent criticism, let alone open dissatisfaction and revolt. But, strange as it may seem, the publication of the translation of the Gospels into modern Greek excited the patriotic indignation of the University students to an extraordinary degree against the Queen and the Archbishop, as the authors of such a profanation of what was held to be the palladium of Hellenism; that is to say, the original text of the Gospels as written by their authors in classical Greek. The Queen having been the originator of the idea, the publication of the translation was attributed to Russian or Pan-Slavist intrigues against Greek supremacy

over the Orthodox populations in the East, and the streets resounded with shouts of "Down with Olga!" "Down with Russia!" "Long live the King!" Mild rioting continued for three days. Its manifestations were mostly limited to formidable sounding vociferations by seemingly infuriated crowds, without any damage to life or property. The whole garrison, however, was on foot, including artillery, part of it guarding the Royal Palace, being lined up along the Boulevard between the palace and the Place de la Constitution. I had to traverse the cordon of troops stationed there every day, in order to reach the office of the Legation and had no difficulty whatsoever in doing so, although I had no pass or permit to show, and as a new-comer could hardly have been known to any of the officers. Altogether a certain amount of good-nature seemed to prevail, to which I could testify from personal experience. It so happened that in order to reach one of the foreign Legations I had to cross one of the main streets filled with a ferociously howling mob. My cabby dashed at a gallop right into the crowd, and nothing daunted by their wild shouts of indignation, turned round to me with a broad grin and said in broken French, "Never mind them, Monsieur; their howls are not against you, but against Minister Theotokis." The Queen continued her daily drives in an open landau, accompanied only by her lady-in-waiting, on the road leading to the Piræus, where she was in the habit of visiting the Russian hospital, one of her charitable foundations, and, to the credit of the populace of Athens let it be said, the hostile crowds would always let her pass in respectful silence. I have since had some experience of so-called "bloodless revolutions" and would not wish even my worst enemy to have to witness one, but if the rioting on that occasion is to be dignified by the sinister name of revolution, I would not mind so much seeing another one myself—in Athens of course.

However, on the third day the troops, probably tired of their long inactivity and defenceless exposure to the jeers of the rabble, were ordered to fire a volley, with the result that six or seven innocent bystanders were killed, one of whom fell dead at the feet of a twelve-year-old boy whom his father, one of my colleagues, had taken out to see the fun and who paid for his curiosity with a bad attack of

hysteria. One of the curious features of these riots was the presence, sometimes in the thickest of the trouble, of numbers of babies in perambulators attended by their excitement-loving nurses.

The funeral of the victims of the shooting took place the same evening, the corpses being carried in open coffins to the palace, presumably to be paraded before the eyes of the King. The next day perfect quiet was restored, and the whole affair ended with the resignation of the Prime Minister and of the Metropolitan Archbishop.

These events, although implicating in a measure the responsibility of the Queen, in no way impaired the popularity of the King. Shouts of "Long live the King!" were mostly intermingled with cries of "Down with Olga!" When in speaking of the King I used the word "popularity," I was perhaps slightly stretching a point. He was too much of a typical blue-eyed, blond-haired Norseman, not only in appearance, but also in his whole mental make-up, ever to become really popular among a people of a Southern race. He also disdained cheap devices of popularity-catching, unlike his predecessor, King Otto—a Bavarian Prince—who used to wear sometimes the supposedly Greek but really Albanian national costume with white leggings and a fluted short white petticoat which made him look like a great burly, red-bearded ballet girl. But King George unquestionably enjoyed the esteem and confidence of the nation, who recognized the invaluable services he had rendered to his adopted country, thanks to his intimate family connection with the reigning dynasties of Russia and Great Britain as brother-in-law of Emperor Alexander III and King Edward.

At the time of my arrival at Athens the memory of the recent Greco-Turkish War had apparently been obliterated, and the fact seemed to have been forgotten that it was Russia's ultimatum to Turkey which had arrested the triumphal march on Athens of victorious Edhem Pasha and had saved Greece from the horrors of a Turkish invasion. Popular feeling seemed to be decidedly unfriendly to Russia, to some extent, no doubt, as a result of the part our Government had taken in the curious muddle the Great Powers had made of the settlement of the Cretan question in attempting



to conciliate Turkish claims with the national aspirations of the Greeks. As in every question connected with Near Eastern politics, the traditional rivalries among the Great Powers played the same baleful part which for so long had served merely to bolster up Turkish domination over subject Christian races, and it was but natural that Russia's participation in policies antagonistic to Greek national aspirations should have appeared in the eyes of the Greek people as a betrayal of a helpless co-religionist.

In a confidential letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs I took the liberty of pointing out that our political interests could not possibly be served by an attitude which alienated the sympathy of the Greek people, the same people who at the time of the Crimean War had stood by us, and had, at grave risk to their own country, sent a brigade of volunteers to fight in the ranks of our Army. I further suggested that a day might come when perhaps we should be glad to welcome the support of Hellenism as a counterpoise to Bulgarian preponderance in the Balkan Peninsula.

My advocacy of the annexation of Crete to the Greek Kingdom as the only rational solution of the Cretan question may have been attributed to a desire on my part to ingratiate myself with the Greeks. All I know is that it remained resultless.

The most interesting personality in Athens was unquestionably King George, with whom I was brought into closer contact than my colleagues (except the British Minister, whose wife, Lady Egerton, *née* Princess Lobanoff-Restovsky, was a special favourite of the Queen) owing to the circumstance that Queen Olga was a Russian. I had many private and quite informal chats with His Majesty. I remember how one day after a lunch on board our flagship, the King, pointing out to me the new part of the town, said that all that part of the Piræus, which was now worth millions, had been nothing but a dreary waste when he first arrived in his Kingdom, and that he could have bought it up for a few thousand drachmas. To my rather indiscreet inquiry why he had not jumped at such a rare speculation, he laughingly replied: "To begin with, I hadn't the cash"; and added in a serious tone: "To tell you the truth, I did not know how long I was going to stay in Greece." Then he

went on to tell me, how, as a mere boy of sixteen or seventeen having been elected to the throne of Greece after the expulsion of King Otto, he had arrived in his new Kingdom among total strangers whose very language he did not understand, with nobody of his own people to counsel and support him, and had spent his first night in the Royal Palace, which he found absolutely bare of every vestige of furniture except a camp bed and a cane chair, on which he placed his watch and his revolver, in the great throne-room. I could only express my profound admiration for the wonderful success the King had achieved in his reign of nearly forty years. Apart from such advantages as he derived from his family connections, his success was entirely due to his personal qualities, his liberal mind, his dispassionate level-headed judgment, his knowledge of men and consummate skill in handling them. I confess I was very much under the charm of his winning personality, and never enjoyed anything so much as my occasional long and always most interesting and illuminating conversations with the King. With the beginning of spring the Court used to retire to Tatoi, near Athens, which the King had acquired for a summer residence and where he had laid out a large park of which he was very proud, and which he liked to show personally to visitors.

I remember a conversation after luncheon in the garden at Tatoi when the Queen, who always had a tender spot in her heart for our Navy, of which her father, the Grand Duke Constantine, had been the Grand Admiral, and who took a lively interest in the state of affairs in the Far East, where our fleet was naturally expected to take an active part in case of war, asked me what I thought of the political situation in that part of the world. I replied that I had no doubt that unless we abandoned our aggressive policy in Korea we should in the near future find ourselves engaged in a war with Japan, the issue of which would spell disaster for us, considering that we did not seem to make any adequate preparations for meeting such an eventuality. This casual expression of opinion much impressed the Queen and caused her to report it to whom it most concerned, a circumstance which stood me in good stead, as will be seen in a later chapter.

When the heat became unbearable in the beginning of

July, we made up our minds to spend the summer somewhere in the Swiss mountains. I procured a three months' leave of absence and we started on our journey from the Piræus in an Italian steamer which took us round Cape Matapan, on the southern extremity of the Peloponnesus to Korfu, and, touching at Brindisi and Ancona, finally to Venice.

The next morning—it was the 14th of July, the date of the fall of the Bastille—I went out early to have my coffee on the Piazza di San Marco. Having bought a copy of the *Paris Herald*, and whilst I was studying the “snobs” column sitting at a table in front of the Café Florian with my back to the Campanile, I was startled by a sinister crackling sound, which made me turn round, and I saw the Campanile, not falling, but settling down on its base in a most extraordinary way, the top only having fallen off and smashed the outer wall of the Biblioteca Reale. I pulled out my watch, ceding to the instinctive impulse for timing things which every diplomat should cultivate. It was exactly 9.52 a.m. At the same moment a shout of “Fuggiam” went up from the crowd of people who happened to be on the piazza, and they came in a wild rush in my direction, followed by an enormous cloud of marble dust—the dust of centuries—from both of which I fled into the courtyard of the Royal Palace. As soon as the dust was laid I made off to the telegraph station in the proud possession of such a marvellous “scoop” and dashed off to my Ministerial chief a rush telegram couched in the most exquisite “journalese.” I happened to have seen in the morning papers that the King of Italy, who was on a visit to the Russian Court, would attend that very evening a state banquet at the Palace of Peterof, and I wanted to enable my chief to parade before a foreign monarch the wonderful efficiency of the information service of his department.

## CHAPTER XXI

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance—Failure of Russian policy—Public opinion in Russia—Russia and Manchuria—Prologue to the crisis in the relations between Russia and Japan.

ALTHOUGH I had no longer any connection with our Far Eastern affairs after my recall from Tokio in 1899, and had no expectation of ever being called upon to return to Japan, I followed with deep interest the course of events in that part of the world. The beginning of the year 1902 had been marked by an event the importance of which, from the point of view of our interests in the Far East, could not possibly be overrated—I mean the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. It meant the realization of a political combination the possibility and dangerous character of which I had pointed out in my memorandum in March 1897, and which elementary prudence should have caused us to seek to forestall by every means in our power. That such means had been within our reach can hardly be gainsaid. However, we not only failed to avail ourselves of such means when literally thrust upon us, but, by our non-acceptance of the perfectly fair and advantageous offer made to us by the Japanese Government in March 1898, we actually did our best to push Japan into the arms of Great Britain. As to the latter Power, instead of seeking a friendly understanding which might have eliminated all causes of mutual rivalry and friction in regard to Asiatic affairs, an understanding which presumably would have been welcomed by the British Government at a time when Great Britain had her hands full with the Boer War, we chose to join the ranks of those Powers whose senseless and futile animosity found expression in gestures correspondingly ineffectual, but nevertheless sorely irritating to a proud and powerful nation.

It is but natural to ask oneself the question : Why did our Government fail to take advantage of such a favourable



conjuncture of circumstances ? To attribute this failure exclusively to the incapacity of the directors of Russia's foreign policy would not be fair. We must never lose sight of the fact that the Government of Russia, although nominally an "autocracy" or rather an autocratic bureaucracy, was far from being invested with that omnipotence which one associates with the idea of "autocracy" or "Tsarism." Besides being, in the words of one of our wittiest statesmen, "a powerless federation of independent departments whose relations to each other were not always friendly, or even neutral, and sometimes partaking of the character of almost open hostility," our Government had to reckon with what was considered to be "public opinion." This element of "public opinion" was, so to speak, a new-comer in our polity. Up to the end of the reign of the Emperor Nicholas I, in the middle of the last century, what is commonly understood by the term "public opinion" could hardly be said to have had any existence, let alone influence, in Russia. Every Government, even the most tyrannical, will of course always have, in its own interest, to take into account to some extent what it supposes to be the national or popular feeling. So it had been in Russia till about the middle of last century, when the educated classes, the so-called "Intelligentzia," began to acquire some weight in matters of foreign policy, which enabled it, mainly through the growing influence of the Press and of the more enlightened part of the bureaucracy, itself part and parcel of the "Intelligentzia," to create the illusion of a "public opinion" of Russia. This public opinion on the whole favoured an "Imperialistic" policy, the great majority only in regard to the Near East, in connection with the "Great Slav Cause" and Constantinople and the Straits, at the same time being opposed to all political adventures in the Far East ; whereas the extreme jingoistic wing of the "Intelligentzia," represented by the most widely read nationalist organ of the Press, the *Novoe Vremia*, was wedded to an aggressively anti-Japanese policy. But all parties were agreed in believing Great Britain to be the arch-enemy whose opposition and antagonism we were encountering everywhere, blocking the way of our forward policy in the Near East as well as in Persia, Central Asia and the Far

East. Whether it was really necessary for our Government to allow the vagaries of this so-called "public opinion" to influence their decisive action one way or the other, or whether it was simply an effect of the national mentality averse to decisive solutions of any problem—is a question which it would be useless to discuss at present. The fact remains that a unique opportunity was let slip to render our position in the Far East secure by a friendly understanding with one or other of our two rivals. This policy—or rather absence of policy—might have done fairly well, but only under two conditions: first, if we had been prepared to defend with all the military resources of the State, and against all comers, the extremely precarious position we had so recently acquired in Manchuria, and secondly, if we had been willing to abandon entirely our aggressive policy in Korea. Neither of these conditions we were prepared to fulfil, as I was soon to find out when, after a delightful summer in Switzerland, we went to St. Petersburg before returning to Greece.

Before proceeding with my narrative from this point it will be necessary to revert to a subject but lightly touched upon in an earlier chapter. I mean the forward policy we had begun to pursue in Manchuria as a consequence of the successful intervention of Russia, France and Germany which deprived Japan of the principal fruits of her victory over China. It should be kept in view that Prince Lobanoff, who had taken the initiative in bringing about this joint intervention, was pursuing but one object, and that a purely political one, namely, the retrocession of the Liaotung Peninsula with Port Arthur to China, his object being to prevent Japan from gaining a permanent foothold on the continent of Asia, a contingency which he conceived to be replete with dangerous possibilities for Russia as well as for China. In the pursuit of this policy Prince Lobanoff had the fullest support of his colleague, the Minister of Finance, Witte, and, in his turn, he supported Witte in the negotiations they carried on jointly with Li Hung Chang in May 1896. But I very much doubt whether he had had any share whatever in the conception of the plans in regard to Manchuria of his financial colleague, plans to which the convention concluded with Li Hung Chang, grant-

ing us the right to prolong our Siberian railroad on Chinese territory across Northern Manchuria to Vladivostok, was to serve merely as the entering wedge. I rather think that the entire credit for these vast plans should be allotted to Witte, as well as a large part of the responsibility for their ultimate failure. This was the subject—I mean our Manchurian policy—which caused the hostility towards me of that great statesman and patriot which lasted until we were brought into intimate and friendly relationship as joint plenipotentiaries for the conclusion of peace with Japan, when we were able to work in entire agreement and harmony for what we felt and knew to be for the best interests of our country.

As our disagreement concerned some most important questions, or I had perhaps better say, guiding principles in the conduct of international politics, to which he was a comparative stranger, whereas I had made them the study of a lifetime, I considered myself entitled to hold and to express an independent opinion, however much in conflict with the views and policy of even so great a statesman as Witte was in my eyes.

In proceeding now to explain exhaustively the considerations which impelled me to take up the position in regard to the Manchurian question which gave rise to this disagreement, I must mention that until then I had met Witte only once, when I had a brief interview with him concerning some business of our Legation in Serbia, of which I was then the head. I had always avoided seeking his acquaintanceship in order to prevent even the remotest suspicion of having anything to share with the ambitious intriguers who were toadying on the then all-powerful Minister. I also feel bound to state that, having spent all my life in the service of my country abroad, I never had taken any interest in the manifold stories current about intrigues which were said to surround the Throne, and therefore was totally ignorant of the fact—of which I was to learn only much later—that a certain clique, having the ear of the Sovereign, was engaged in a struggle for power against Witte on the battleground of the Far Eastern question, and that the position I had taken up had been of service to some extent to the clique hostile to him. I mention this



circumstance only to show that if Witte at the time suspected me, as seems to have been the case, of having been a party to the intrigues directed against him, he did me a grievous injustice, of which, I think, he became convinced himself when we came to know each other better.

The Manchurian question, as far as Russia was concerned, is covered by the general question whether territorial expansion practised by a strong Power at the cost of a weaker one is morally justifiable or not, a question which cannot be answered offhand, nor can it be answered categorically either in one sense or in the other. This is a question which can only be dealt with specifically in each case on its own merits.

What, for instance, has been the history of the phenomenal growth of the United States but the gradual expansion of the original thirteen States until they cover now the best part of the North American continent, an expansion achieved originally by the gradual extermination of the savage aborigines or by treaties with friendly Powers such as the "Louisiana purchase" and the purchase of Alaska, or else by conquest such as the acquisition of Texas, New Mexico and California. But who will deny that this expansion, howsoever achieved, has been a blessing to all parts of the continent absorbed into this great Union?

Then again, take the British Empire, whose colossal expansion includes now some eight hundred thousand more square miles absorbed, a result of the World War, if a speech by the British Prime Minister in the House of Commons is correctly reported by the newspapers. But blind prejudice alone, or such international hatred as has been bred by the war, could deny that absorption in the British Empire has proved an inestimable boon to the countries and peoples brought under British rule, and has powerfully advanced their material and moral welfare. Such of them as India and the former Boer Republics have shown their appreciation of the privilege of living under the shelter of the Union Jack by their eagerness in joining the British Colonies who were rushing with such enthusiastic unanimity and patriotism to the assistance of their mother-country in the hour of her need. In this connection I remember a conversation I had some thirty years ago with



the head of one of the important German firms at Hong-Kong. He had been holding forth on the subject of German colonial policy, of which he was a convinced opponent, and wound up his discourse by saying that if by any chance Hong-Kong ever became a German colony he would the very next day emigrate and set up his tent in another British one.

Could any one deny that French expansion in Africa and Asia has benefited the native populations, and has converted such barbaric States as Algeria and Tunis into highly prosperous civilized communities?

When we come to Russia we find that the colossal dimensions which the Russian Empire had reached before its downfall and suicide through the war and the revolution had been the result of the gradual expansion of its original nucleus, the comparatively small and insignificant Grand Duchy of Moscow. In the course of three centuries this expansion had been going on to the West, the South and the East, at the cost of weaker neighbours or savage aborigines as in Siberia. The question of Russia's expansion to the West, its causes, result, and its justification, is a subject which I shall have to treat in another chapter. As to our expansion to the South, the expulsion of the Turks from South Russia and the Crimea, of which little need be said, and the acquisition of Transcaucasia and such parts of what is known as Armenia, which had been under Persian and Turkish rule, every fair-minded judge of historical developments will, I think, agree that the populations thereby brought under Russia's sway derived from it all the benefits which a stable and powerful Government, guaranteeing law and order and security of life and property, could confer on populations torn by perennial race feuds or victims of Persian or Turkish tyranny and misrule. To the beneficent effects of Russian dominion over Transcaucasia, I can testify from personal experience. Shortly after completing my studies at the Imperial Law School, I was sent to the Caucasus as an attaché to the chief of the civil administration of Transcaucasia, where I had ample occasion to gain an insight into the condition of things in that outlying dominion of the Empire. Under the enlightened rule of the Viceroy, the Grand Duke Michael, youngest brother of the Emperor Alexander II, the country

had attained the heyday of its prosperity, the hill tribes in the mountain region had all been subdued and pacified, and everywhere in this beautiful land, blessed by Nature with a fine climate, a fertile soil and inexhaustible mineral wealth, reigned law and order, and the perennially warring races—Georgians, Armenians and Tartars—were dwelling side by side in peace and amity, all of them proud of calling themselves Russians. The Viceroy had, as a ruler, the invaluable assistance of the Chief of his Civil Administration, Baron Nicolay, descendant of a family of the Alsatian nobility, a branch of which is still flourishing in France, who was in every respect a real statesman in the European sense. Both their names will be for ever identified with the golden age of the Caucasus, now vanished, never to return, engulfed in the awful catastrophe of the Russian Empire, to which the deluded sons of the Caucasus have contributed more than their share. I wonder whether they realize now the whole meaning of the crime they have committed against their country and people.

What I have said above about the benefits conferred on Transcaucasia by the expansion of Russia in that direction applies with equal force to our expansion in Central Asia and the gradual absorption of the various Khanates whose populations undoubtedly fared better under the sway of Russian bureaucracy than under the tyranny of their native rulers. Furthermore, the expansion to the East by the gradual absorption of the whole North of the Asiatic continent meant simply the creation of a civilized State in what had been merely a hunting-ground to roving hordes of savage aborigines.

The only justification for expansion as practised sometimes by powerful States at the expense of weaker neighbours, must be the degree of the benefit conferred on the absorbed territories and their populations. As to the ways and means employed in the achievement of such expansion, all one can say is that in this respect all expanding nations are living in glass houses in the neighbourhood of which indignant stone-throwing is a practice hardly to be commended.

Our attempt at expansion in Manchuria under the guise of "pacific penetration" by railroads, banks, etc., as con-

templated by Witte, was never carried through to the end, and therefore no impartial verdict can be found; and an *a priori* condemnation would be manifestly unjust.

The origin of all our plans in regard to Manchuria date back to the negotiations with Li Hung Chang at the time of the coronation festivities in Moscow.

One of the concessions obtained from China on that occasion had been, as mentioned before, the permission to use, in case of an emergency, the port of Kiao-chow as a naval base for our fleet in Far Eastern waters. No one appeared to attach any particular importance to this arrangement, nor does it seem to have been kept secret. At any rate the Emperor William was aware of it, and having conceived the plan of acquiring Kiao-chow himself as a naval station for his fleet and as compensation for the murder of some German missionaries in the interior of China, is said to have casually asked the Emperor Nicholas, with whom he had an interview in the summer of 1897, whether he would forgo his right to the use of that port and acquire instead the use of Port Arthur, the latter port being in every way more suitable, being within easy reach by land from Russian possessions. The Emperor Nicholas appears to have given his unreserved consent to this arrangement, and the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Mouravieff, anxious to consolidate his position by a brilliant diplomatic coup, undertook to settle the matter with China. In this he was entirely successful, the result being the appearance at Port Arthur of our Pacific squadron for the purpose of wintering there with the consent of the Chinese Government. Then followed the conclusion at Peking of a convention by which China leased to Russia, for a period of twenty-five years, Port Arthur, as a naval port, and Talienwan as a port to be open to the commerce of the world, with the adjacent territory on the Peninsula of Liaotung. Some little friction arose with the British Government regarding the future status of Talienwan, leading to *pourparlers* in which Count Mouravieff had occasion to display his ignorance of the difference between an "open port," in the sense attributed to this expression in the Far East, and a "free port," or "porto franco," in the sense of freedom from customs duties.



In the matter of the projected acquisition of Port Arthur the Emperor had seen fit to consult some of the Ministers, who, however, all opposed it, among them principally the Minister of Finance, Witte, and the Minister of the Navy, Admiral Tirtoff, the general impression being that it was an adventurous undertaking which could only lead to serious complications with Japan. The reader will remember that in a preceding chapter I have shown, basing my assertion on documentary evidence in the possession of our Foreign Department, that the Japanese Government itself had seized this very opportunity of our acquisition of Port Arthur to show us how such dreaded complications could have been avoided, provided, of course, we had been willing to accept its perfectly fair and reasonable proposal.

This opposition did not cease, as true patriotism would have demanded in the presence of the Sovereign's decision and of the fact that this decision had actually been carried out. It took the form of a very lukewarm support of the policy, and the attitude of the dissenting Ministers, aggravated later on by serious dissensions among themselves, sometimes leading to proceedings or abstentions bordering on underhand "sabotage." This not only constituted a grave embarrassment in the prosecution of the policy, but also was the cause of the Emperor's losing faith in his legitimate advisers, and led him to place his trust in irresponsible outsiders whose backstairs influence and interference in the gravest affairs of State was bound to lead to the most disastrous consequences. For one thing, this deplorable state of affairs was perfectly well known and discounted by the Japanese Government, and therefore rendered the conduct of negotiations, such as I was subsequently entrusted with, an entirely hopeless task.

One of the effects of this absence of unity, which made itself felt as soon as we had taken possession of Port Arthur, was the neglect of the Naval Department to provide at once for the urgently needed deepening of the western basin, in which there would have been ample space for the largest fleet, and for the cutting through of another channel which would have prevented the bottling up of our fleet in a harbour with a unique and extremely narrow outlet to the open sea. The explanation of this inactivity may have



been that the naval authorities were reluctant to sanction any considerable expenditure for the improvement of a port the choice of which had not met with their approval, and that they were still clinging to the hope of some day being able to secure Mozampo as a base for our fleet in Far Eastern waters. The result, however, of their inactivity proved to be one of the contributory causes of our defeat by Japan.

In approaching the subject of the part Witte had played in the conception and direction of our policy in Manchuria, I am bound to say that although subsequently, during the Portsmouth conferences, we spent several weeks in daily intimate intercourse, that particular subject was never discussed between us. All I relate here is based merely on facts of common knowledge and such deductions as may logically be drawn therefrom.

It stands to reason that his opposition to the acquisition of Port Arthur was inspired mainly by the purest motives of patriotic apprehension that this adventurous enterprise might lead to war with Japan, which, he rightly thought, it was the prime duty of our policy to avoid by any means compatible with Russia's honour and dignity. His was a constructive and creative mind. By his fostering care and powerful support he had succeeded in creating and developing industries which he intended should raise Russia from the condition of a merely agricultural State to a higher plane of economic development ; he had placed our monetary system and circulation on a solid gold basis ; he had conceived and set in operation a grandiose plan of a pacific conquest of Manchuria by means of industrial and commercial penetration ; and he knew that the success of his life-work depended on the maintenance of peace. Naturally he looked askance at an enterprise which not only threatened serious complications with Japan, but also meant the intrusion of an extraneous element into a sphere he had theretofore monopolized as exclusively his own, where he reigned supreme with the aid of his railway, his strongly financed Russo-Chinese bank, a hybrid politico-financial institution which in reality was but a slightly disguised branch of the Russian treasury, and even his own army, in the shape of so-called " frontier guards," in occupation

of the strip of land leased to the "Eastern Chinese Railroad." The appearance of a naval Commander-in-Chief at Port Arthur invested with extensive powers and foreshadowing the advent of considerable military forces for the defence of the newly acquired territory—in other words, the advent of a rival Power in a sphere theretofore exclusively his own—could hardly have been welcome. Nevertheless, determined to make the best of the situation, he applied all his wonted energy to hastening the construction of the branch line from Harbin to Port Arthur and Talienwan; to the construction of extensive harbour works at the latter port, intended to be made one of the leading commercial ports of the Far East; to the erection of a large number of model buildings of variegated architecture in the town of Talienwan or Port Dalny (which means "far-away" port), as it was renamed. In the midst of all this feverish activity a radical change occurred in the situation which rudely disturbed Witte's plans for the pacific conquest of Manchuria.

The so-called "Boxer rising" in China; the siege of the foreign Legations in Peking; the sudden attack of Blagovestchensk on the Amur by Chinese regulars, who bombarded the town from the other side of the river; the massacre of several thousand Chinese inhabitants of that town, who by order of the panic-stricken commander of the small garrison were driven into the river; the subsequent invasion of Northern Manchuria by the troops of General Grodekoff, the Governor-General of the Amur province; the further despatch of large bodies of troops which overran Manchuria and practically achieved the conquest of the whole vast region known by that name—all these events created a situation as embarrassing to our international relations as it was threatening to the supremacy of Witte in Manchurian affairs, a supremacy which was thenceforth bound to be gradually superseded by the military element represented on one side by the Minister of War in St. Petersburg, General Kuropatkin, and on the other by Admiral Alexeeff, Commander-in-Chief of the naval and land forces in the Liaotung Peninsula and of the expeditionary troops sent to Peking to assist the Legations. Thus Witte found himself engaged in a kind of triangular duel with his rivals in which he had to contend, sometimes against one, some-

times against the other, and occasionally against both of them. At the same time, although he had in the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Lamsdorff, a willing and devoted instrument, he was very far from being in a position to direct our foreign policy, as Count Lamsdorff possessed neither the ability nor the personal weight which could have enabled him to influence the decisions of the Sovereign in the direction of his patron's wishes.

It might not be improper to introduce here a few remarks in defence of the memory of the late Admiral Alexeeff, who, when I left Japan in 1900, was praised in the Far Eastern Press as the "Empire-builder," later was dubbed the "notorious Alexeeff," accused of having brought on the war with Japan, and made the scapegoat for all the disaster that overtook us in consequence. He died in 1917, at Kislovodsk in the Caucasus, where he had gone for a cure. Contrary to the generally accepted belief, he was an entirely self-made man, born in the Crimea of the local gentry, and, I believe, of Armenian extraction. Having no relations nor protectors whatever in the great world of St. Petersburg, he owed his promotion exclusively to his own merit and early acquired reputation as one of the ablest and most promising officers in our Navy. As such I had known him in Japan when he was in command of one of the vessels of our squadron on the Far Eastern station, and had ever since kept up friendly relations with him. He was a man of great intelligence, very liberal and well-balanced mind, clear insight and sound judgment in political affairs. The praise at first bestowed upon him as an "Empire-builder" was not unmerited, or rather would have been fully merited if his career as Viceroy had not been cut short by the war. What I can vouch for is that he was never mixed up in Court intrigues of any kind, least of all with that notorious clique of "lumber concession" adventurers whose nefarious proceedings on the Yalou River played such a conspicuous part in the development of events leading up to the outbreak of the war. In the Council of the Empire, of which he was a life member, he had earned general sympathy and esteem by the reserved dignity of his bearing. He remained to the end faithful to the Sovereign who had trusted him, and although



made the victim of every kind of obloquy and having in his possession documentary evidence which entirely exonerated him from all blame, he never wrote nor spoke a single word in his own defence.

The great number of troops we had thrown into Manchuria during the year of the Boxer rising—I was told 190,000 men—and who had overrun the country down to the sea, the occupation of Newchwang, rumours of the intended conclusion of a treaty by which China was to concede to us the management of all custom-houses in Manchuria, and so forth, did not fail to attract the attention of those Powers who were apprehensive of our intention of annexing the whole country and replacing the “open door” by Russian custom-houses and the application of the Russian highly protective and almost prohibitive tariff to the exclusion of foreign trade. Whether from a desire to avoid diplomatic complications, or because Witte was anxious to see our army of occupation removed from a country which he considered as his own special sphere of influence, or because the War Department preferred not to leave too large a number of troops under the command of Admiral Alexeeff, I am unable to say; however, most of these troops were quietly withdrawn, partly, I was told, even by sea, so that before the war broke out there were—according to the information that reached me in Tokio—no more than about 40,000 men of our regular army, not counting the garrison of Port Arthur, besides Witte’s frontier guards, actually present in Manchuria, scattered over an immense territory about double the size of France. Nevertheless, and evidently as a result of some insistence by China, backed by the Powers to whom she had pledged herself to provide for the opening to foreign trade of three places in Manchuria (one of them being Mukden, in the very heart of the country) we concluded a convention with the Peking Government by which we undertook to withdraw all our troops from Manchuria in three instalments, each step of evacuation to be accomplished by a fixed date. Whether or not this convention was concluded with the knowledge, or rather connivance, of the Minister of War, I cannot say. It stands to reason, however, that no more fatal step could possibly have been taken, unless we intended to scuttle.



And even in that case it would have been most imprudent to have done so without a definite arrangement with Japan safeguarding at least some of the vast interests we had acquired and created in Manchuria.

Such was the situation as I found it when I arrived in St. Petersburg. It was plain to me that the Japanese Government, encouraged by the visible vacillations of our Government, by our voluntarily weakened military position, and by the vigorous support of the United States and Great Britain, would attempt to oust us not only from Korea, but from Manchuria as well. As a matter of fact, we had already been approached by the Japanese Government with a tentative proposal foreshadowing their ultimate intention in this respect, as I was to learn later when my reappointment as Minister to Japan had been definitely settled. In short, our position had become one of extreme embarrassment, due to the fact that we had plunged into a forward policy in the Far East totally oblivious of the necessity of having either a large force to sustain it against all comers or else a friendly understanding with either Great Britain or Japan.

At this point it will be proper to consider the question whether the colossal expenditure incurred in the prosecution of our plan of expansion in Manchuria could be justified to the neglect of infinitely more pressing needs which remained unsatisfied in Russia proper. For instance, we had been spending hundreds of millions in providing a foreign country with railways, whilst the most crying unsatisfied need of our own country was precisely the glaring insufficiency of our railway mileage, not to mention the almost total absence of good country roads, a deficiency which was most seriously hampering the economic development of our rural population; that is to say, of about 80 per cent. of the Russian people. It stands to reason that such a waste of the people's treasure on helping to build up the prosperity of a foreign country would be unpardonable, unless as a means to pave the way for that country's ultimate annexation. And that leads us directly to the question whether industrial and commercial penetration could really secure the ultimate aim of such a policy; that is to say, the "pacific conquest"—to use a euphemistic circumlocution for "annexation"—of Manchuria. To this question only one answer could evidently be returned,

and that a negative one. We had, as a matter of fact, already achieved the conquest of Manchuria, not indeed by "pacific penetration," but by the old reliable method of "force of arms." It came about in this way: Chinese regular troops had attacked the open town of Blagovestchensk with artillery fire from the other side of the River Amur. We might have claimed this to have been an unprovoked act of war on the part of China, and replied to it by a formal declaration of war, or we might have sought satisfaction by means of diplomacy in the usual way. We did neither. Instead, General Grodekoff, the Governor-General of the Amur Province, invaded with his troops part of Northern Manchuria and proclaimed its annexation to Russia, so to speak on his own "hook." Further, we poured large numbers of troops into Manchuria, fighting the Chinese regulars wherever we met them, at the same time maintaining the fiction that we were hurrying to the friendly assistance of the Chinese Government in their struggle against the "Boxers," and having overrun the whole country down to the sea, we halted at Newchwang. Thus was completed the military conquest of Manchuria. Now, we might either have claimed its annexation by right of conquest or have negotiated with the Chinese Government some such arrangement as that by which Great Britain secured her hold on Egypt—to the unquestionable benefit of that country and its people, be it said by the way. This time again we did neither the one nor the other. Instead, we concluded the above-mentioned convention for the evacuation of Manchuria in three instalments at fixed dates, thereby disclosing weakness and vacillation which could not but be extremely encouraging to our adversaries. At the same time we thus contracted an obligation which in view of the threatening attitude of Japan and the exposed position of Port Arthur, it was plainly impossible to fulfil, and indeed it never was, whereby we earned the additional reproach of faithlessness and deceit. Still, a way had to be found to extricate us from the embarrassing muddle in which absence of a well-defined policy, dissensions among our leading bureaucrats and consequent vacillations in our political action had landed us. The question was whether we would be justified in accepting even the risk of war in defence of our vast interests in Manchuria, or whether

we would be justified in sacrificing them for the sake of avoiding war with Japan. Neither alternative appeared to me to be acceptable for the following reasons:—

To begin with, there could not possibly be any doubt in the mind of even the most superficial observer of Russian conditions that war with Japan would be not only most unpopular, but would appear incomprehensible to the overwhelming majority of the masses of the people—that is to say, of the peasantry—for the simple reason that the very existence of such a country could hardly have been known to them, except in the vaguest way from mere hearsay. Nor could they be expected to understand why they should be called upon to fight an unknown enemy. The importance of this circumstance could not possibly be overrated considering the influence it must have on the morale of the troops in a war with Japan. I must observe, however, that what I have said here does not apply to the population of Siberia, which, being geographically so much nearer to Japan, could have an instinctive comprehension of the possible necessity of fighting a neighbour who might have made himself in some way troublesome. I would add, in parenthesis, that the Siberian troops in the ensuing war actually did show a morale distinctly superior to that of the reserve troops from Russia proper with whom mainly the war was fought and lost.

Likewise the educated classes—the “*Intelligentsia*”—were undoubtedly opposed to this idea of a war in the Far East, even the extreme jingoistic Press organs, such as the *Novoe Vremia*, in all their bellicose bluster were probably thinking more of “bluffing” the Japanese than of preparing public opinion for actual warfare. As for our military authorities, they seemed to be exclusively preoccupied with the idea of the coming war with our Western neighbours and were obviously not making any preparations for a possible war with Japan, having apparently consented to the convention with China regarding the total evacuation of Manchuria. The Naval Department had, indeed, as far back as 1897, prepared a programme of naval constructions to match the programme of the Japanese increase of naval armaments, scheduled for completion in 1904, but the required appropriation of funds had been spread over a number of



years considerably beyond the term fixed for the completion of the Japanese armaments, evidently in the expectation that the Tokio Government would prove unable financially to fulfil their programme as originally laid out. In this calculation, strangely enough, the fact seems to have been lost sight of, that by guaranteeing the interest on the Chinese loan, the proceeds of which were to have been paid over to Japan as compensation for the retrocession of the Liaotung Peninsula, we had ourselves facilitated the acquisition by the Japanese Government of the funds needed for the completion of their programme. Moreover, another and most serious consideration does not seem to have been taken into account at all, namely, the supreme importance of the presence on the spot and in time of a naval force of sufficient strength to render the transfer of a Japanese Army to the Asiatic continent an enterprise too risky to be contemplated—in other words, the best preventive of a war between Russia and Japan. That a great statesman such as Witte should have neglected, as he seemingly had, this most important consideration can only be explained by supposing that he was too strongly convinced of the possibility of preventing an outbreak of war with Japan by timely concessions, to have for a moment even admitted the probability of such an armed conflict and consequently the urgent necessity of military and naval preparations. Besides, we are not a seafaring nation, and a Russian statesman, remembering the fate of our fleets in the Crimean War, when our Black Sea fleet was sunk by ourselves in the roads of Sevastopol and our Baltic fleet never ventured out to sea beyond the shelter of the fortress of Kronstadt, may well be pardoned for not having very clear ideas as to the value of sea-power and the way to use it.

Under these conditions I felt sure that for us to face the risk of war would mean to court disaster. Nor could I contemplate with equanimity the remaining alternative—the sacrifice of our vast interests in Manchuria—for that would have been the ultimate outcome of an eventual surrender to Japanese exigencies which would be sure to include the evacuation of Manchuria by our troops ; in other words and among other things the abandonment of Port Arthur in an exposed and utterly defenceless position. Moreover, an



unconditional knocking under to Japanese pretensions would have dealt a fatal blow to our prestige; that is to say, to the only, albeit very unsubstantial and precarious, mainstay of our position in the Far East. It was necessary therefore to find a compromise which would enable us to "save our face," and at the same time to safeguard at least our most important interests in Manchuria: the possession of Port Arthur and the railway we had built at such great cost to the Russian people. In order to reach such a compromise the necessity imposed itself to resign ourselves to certain sacrifices, which, after all, would be the not undeserved penalty for a policy pursued with such reckless want of foresight. The task confronting us was the conciliation of both parties; that is to say, of Japan as well as of the Powers whose support emboldened the Tokio Government to take up an attitude decidedly adverse to us in the Manchurian question. In regard to Japan we should have to satisfy her pretensions to exclusive domination in Korea, which could be done by reverting to the offer the Japanese Government itself had made to us in March 1898, on the condition, of course, of that Government agreeing to leave us an equally unreservedly free hand in Manchuria. The conciliation of the other two Powers who were giving Japan their support in the Manchurian question would necessarily demand of us the renunciation of the plan of the "pacific conquest" of Manchuria in the sense of making of that vast country a domain reserved for exclusive exploitation by our own commerce and industry, and the unreserved opening not only of three places, as provided by their convention with China, but of the whole country, conditioned only upon the establishment of fixed customs duties more moderate even than those levied in the open ports of China under international treaties. The interests of these Powers being mainly—although, of course, not exclusively—commercial, these concessions, accompanied by a reasonable settlement of the vexed question of jurisdiction, might satisfy them and cause them to desist from giving their support to Japanese pretensions, a support of which, besides, the Japanese Government would no longer stand in need if we had succeeded in reaching a friendly understanding with them as outlined above.

Such were the views I entertained then and expressed

succinctly in a short memorandum presented to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Lamsdorff, at his request, after my reappointment as Minister to Japan had taken place. This reappointment had been facilitated by the fact that Mr. Iswolsky had requested, for family reasons, to be transferred to some post in Europe, and it had been possible to grant his request by appointing him to the coveted post of Copenhagen, vacant through the transfer of Count Benckendorff to London, as Ambassador vice Mr. de Staal, who had resigned on account of his great age.

## CHAPTER XXII

Reappointment as Minister to Japan—A new comet—The Yalou concession—  
Arrival at Tokio—Visit to Japan of General Kuropatkin—Fall of  
Witte—Nikko—Final negotiations—Declaration of war.

THE reappointment of a diplomatic representative to a post previously occupied by him, in the same capacity and with the same rank, was an occurrence sufficiently unusual to require some explanation. As a matter of fact, there had been in our diplomatic history but one case of the kind—the reappointment of Baron (later Count) Brunnow, after the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris, to the post of Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Britain, which he had occupied before the outbreak of the Crimean War, his promotion to the rank of Ambassador having taken place much later. In my case it was not, as in his, a question of choosing the fittest person for renewing friendly relations after a war, but evidently a vague hope that my previous relations with the Japanese Government and my familiarity with political conditions in Japan might be of valuable assistance in my efforts to prevent a rupture, to the avoidance of which, both Witte as well as Count Lamsdorff, attached the greatest importance.

They were probably both fortified in this expectation by the knowledge of my previous attitude in regard to Far Eastern affairs, when on the eve of my departure for my first mission to Japan I had not hesitated to oppose in an elaborate memorandum the forward policy which was then in high favour at Court. They may have conceived some misgivings when they found that in a new memorandum, presented after my reappointment to Japan had become a fact, I had expressed views unwelcome to them, namely, that I held the scheme of the "pacific conquest" of Manchuria, through "pacific penetration" by means of railways,

banks, etc., to be impracticable ; that, therefore, the huge expenditure incurred in the pursuit of such a scheme did not seem to me to have been justifiable ; but that now we were bound in duty to defend the vast interests acquired and created by us in Manchuria at such onerous cost to the State. Count Lamsdorff never mentioned the subject to me, but he began showing me a marked coldness, to which, I must say, I did not pay any attention, knowing the peculiarities of his character. He, however, caused to be communicated to me a copy of a memorandum which Witte had had drawn up controverting my arguments, as was but natural under the circumstances. It was only a year later, upon my return to Russia after the outbreak of the war, that I learned that serious endeavours had been unsuccessfully put forward to cause the Emperor to revoke my appointment to Japan and that I had unwittingly incurred the bitter enmity of both these statesmen, a circumstance of which the Japanese were well aware and which did not facilitate the conduct of my negotiations with them.

Another and a most important circumstance was kept from my knowledge before I started for my mission, although it concerned very closely the question of our relations with Japan. It appears that a new and erratic celestial body in the shape of a minor comet—if I may use such a simile—had suddenly made its appearance on the horizon and was preparing to invade the planetary system of the legitimate bureaucracy revolving round the throne, obviously threatening to cause most serious perturbations affecting the regular orbits of the major planets. When I was still in St. Petersburg, this comet—then a mere nucleus—was not yet visible to the naked eye, and not being on intimate terms with the leading astronomers, I was not aware of its near approach to our solar system and was to learn of its presence only on arrival in Tokio, when the new comet's tail had already spread over a wide expanse of the celestial vault, its end resting on the Yalou River dividing Manchuria from Korea. This mysterious new-comer was that Mr. Bezobrazoff who has become notorious all over the world as one of those who are supposed to have brought on the war with Japan. He has been accused of having been the leader of a gang of greedy adventurers eager to exploit a gigantic timber



concession on the Korean bank of the Yalou River, regardless of the collision with Japan which their doings were bound to provoke. It was rumoured that this enterprise was looked upon with great favour in high places and that many influential personages, including some members of the reigning dynasty, had large pecuniary interests in it. As these rumours have been zealously spread by revolutionists and malcontents of every description and utilized as a weapon in the warfare waged against the Monarchy, which ultimately led to the destruction of the Empire and the ruin of the nation, I will throw such light as my personal knowledge will permit on this somewhat obscure affair, the importance of which has been grossly exaggerated for purposes of propaganda.

To begin with, I am in a position to affirm positively that the question of the Yalou timber concession was never raised, nor even alluded to, in the course of the negotiations preceding the outbreak of war, as but natural, considering that these negotiations concerned momentous questions of political supremacy, which is solved to mutual satisfaction or decided by force of arms would *eo ipso* have settled all such matters of comparative insignificance. Therefore the accusation of having been directly instrumental in bringing about the rupture with Japan, which has frequently been brought against the originator and promoters of the Yalou timber concession enterprise, necessarily falls to the ground. What is said here, however, is not by any means meant to palliate the dangerous, and therefore under then existing circumstances really nefarious, character of that enterprise—a subject to which I shall revert farther on.

As far as Mr. Bezobrazoff is concerned, I cannot speak from personal knowledge of his personality, his character or his political aims, as I have never met him, neither before nor after his brief spell of apparently omnipotent influence, all manifestations of which relate to the time between my departure from St. Petersburg and my return from Japan after the outbreak of war. As far as my knowledge goes, no breath of scandal has ever touched his personal honour and integrity. He seems to have been one of those idealistic dreamers who can hardly be blamed for entertaining seductive although impracticable visions of their country's exaltation

and aggrandizement. It appears that he had submitted to the Emperor a grandiose plan of the acquisition for Russia in the Far East of an Empire similar to Great Britain's Indian Empire by a similar process of gradual expansion, begun and effected by an organization framed on the lines of the defunct East India Company. The timber concession on the Yalou, obtained several years before that from the Korean Government by a merchant of Vladivostok, was to have served, so to speak, as an entering wedge. The Emperor was said to have taken up the tempter's idea with alacrity and to have given his plans every possible support, against the advice of all the leading Ministers of State, with the sole exception of the Minister of the Interior, Plehwe (a bitter enemy of Witte), who may have looked upon possible complications in the Far East as a useful diversion of public attention from the growing discontent and revolutionary unrest at home. The realization of Bezobrazoff's scheme could, of course, not be undertaken without the command of very considerable funds. To obtain such funds from the State Treasury was not to be thought of, because Witte, as Minister of Finance, would never have consented to it, although he may, under pressure from above, have occasionally placed at Bezobrazoff's disposal comparatively insignificant sums. The main financial support had, therefore, to be sought from other sources: voluntary contributions from the private means of august personages—and it was rumoured that there had been one or two such cases—and principally, of course, distribution of shares of the projected enterprise among wealthy society people belonging to the Court circle, or others ambitious of improving their standing by becoming shareholders in an enterprise looked upon with favour by the Sovereign. But it seems to me hardly credible that any one of these possessors of superfluous wealth, who had placed part of it in shares of Bezobrazoff's enterprise, which presented all the characteristics of a political adventure rather than of a sound financial speculation, could have counted upon any, let alone colossal, returns from investments in such an obviously wild-cat scheme. My belief is that these people were acting either under the influence of some patriotic delusion, or from motives of snobbery. But they hardly deserved the obloquy heaped on them as reckless speculators

willing to sacrifice their country's interests and welfare to their sordid greed. It is, however, quite likely that they became themselves objects of exploitation by the shady or merely needy characters who turn up wherever doubtful politico-financial schemes seem to offer fair chances for easy money to be made.

Our departure from Europe suffered some delay from the necessity partly of preparing for an unexpected new change of residence, partly of combining my plans with those of Mr. Iswolsky, who was under orders not to leave Japan before my arrival. At last, in the beginning of March, we were able to start, and after a delightful passage through the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean we reached our destination on April 12, 1903. Steaming up the Bay of Kobe, we found the whole Japanese fleet at anchor in the roadstead. Captain Roussin, our naval agent and an old friend of mine, who had come to meet us, explained that the Japanese fleet had been gathered there for the purpose of being reviewed by the Emperor who was temporarily in residence at Kioto, the ancient capital of Japan. He also brought me a letter from Mr. Iswolsky informing me that we were both to have our audiences with the Emperor at Kioto for the presentation of our letters, his of recall and mine of credence, and that he was awaiting my arrival at Tokio for the transfer to me of the Legation. I thereupon made up my mind to proceed alone to Yokohama and Tokio and to send my family to Kioto, there to await my return. Having seen them off to the station, I went with Captain Roussin to pay a visit to the captain of the *Askold*, one of our fastest cruisers sent by Admiral Alexeeff from Port Arthur to be present at the Imperial Review. After luncheon the captain took us on shore in his steam cutter, and on the way he gave me a chance to have a good look at the Japanese fleet, which presented a very imposing sight. While we were creeping along up and down the lines of the fleet at some five or six knots an hour, I was much struck by the smart appearance and extraordinary speed of the double-funnelled Japanese steam cutters which were flitting to and fro between the ships and the shore. It occurred to me to ask the captain of the *Askold* what he thought of the Japanese fleet. He replied that the material part of the Japanese Navy seemed to be excellent indeed,



but that he had his doubts as to the personnel coming up to the mark as regards the handling of their ships. This was the same captain, who little more than a year later, at the time of the ill-fated sortie of our fleet from Port Arthur was compelled—evidently on account of the not unskilful handling of the Japanese fleet—to seek shelter in a neutral port. It seems to me that undervaluation of the enemy's forces and efficiency, so common at the time among naval as well as military authorities, was one of the main causes of our defeat in the war, just as our supercilious assurance that tiny Japan would never dare to attack the Russian colossus helped to bring it on. Captain Roussin, however, one of the ablest officers of our Navy and a man of great intelligence and sound judgment, who had listened in silence, with a sarcastic smile on his lips, to my conversation with the captain of the *Askold*, did not by any means share the latter's superficial views. What he told me of the organization of the Japanese Navy, the condition of its fighting units, and the thorough efficiency of its personnel, together with some unspoken but palpably entertained misgivings as to the conditions prevailing in our own fleet, gave me food for most serious and painful reflections in regard to the possible outcome of a war with Japan and confirmed my conviction of the necessity of straining every nerve to prevent such an eventuality.

On my arrival at Tokio I was met by Mr. Iswolsky, and we proceeded at once to the formal transfer to me of the Legation. Before leaving for Kioto to have his farewell audience with the Emperor he naturally acquainted me with all the developments that had taken place during the five weeks that I had been at sea on my way from Europe, and he imparted to me a piece of information of a very startling nature indeed, which had come to him, so to speak, accidentally, a few days before my arrival. A young officer had arrived from Port Arthur on some personal business, and having reported himself, as in duty bound, to the Minister had told a rather alarming tale of the extraordinary doings on the Yalou River of the agents of the timber company. They seemed to have obtained, under the pretext of needed protection, the despatch to the Yalou of a considerable body of troops who had begun the construction of earthworks



which looked very much like future batteries and so forth. Although quite assured of the credibility of this officer, who had visited the locality in question on his way from Port Arthur to Japan, Mr. Iswolsky had refrained from reporting the matter to the Government knowing that I should arrive in a couple of days, and would then do it myself in the way I would see fit. The whole matter had been as much a matter of surprise to him as it was to me.

Now the absurdity of a Power like Russia, possessing on its own territory in Europe and Asia an almost untouched forest area of more than two million square miles, needing a timber concession at the far-away mouth of the Yalou River on the Korean-Manchurian frontier, and moreover a timber concession defended by earthworks and Cossacks, was too self-evident not to give rise in the minds of the Japanese to the unshakable conviction that we were preparing for some armed aggression against Japanese interests in Korea. All these provocative proceedings were welcome to the large and influential party which was in favour of bringing the chronic conflict with Russia to a decisive issue by force of arms. It was, therefore, not to be expected that the Government then in power, headed by Count Katsura and Baron Komura, would raise any protest against our proceedings on the Yalou, but these proceedings were nevertheless bound to cut the ground from under my feet in view of the forthcoming negotiations, in so far, of course, as our Government really wished to bring them to a peaceful termination, as I could have no doubt was their earnest desire. These considerations impelled me to take upon myself the duty of protesting most vigorously against these proceedings in a telegram the terms of which were as forcible and categorical as I could make them. My surmise as to the probable attitude in this matter of the Japanese Government proved to have been correct. At our frequent interviews the subject was never brought up by Baron Komura, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, nor did he ever allude in even the remotest way to our doings on the Yalou, which continued in spite of my repeated warnings. He naturally was fully cognizant of them, in fact, much more so than I, who was systematically kept in ignorance of developments there.

Having attended to the most pressing business, I took the train for Kioto, leaving the Legation in charge of the First Secretary, Prince Koudacheff, one of the best men and noblest and purest characters I have ever met in my long life, who became one of my dearest friends, and who must be well known to many of my American readers, as he accompanied me later to Washington as First Secretary and then as Councillor of the Embassy. I am happy to know that he is at present safe at Peking, where he was appointed Minister by the late Imperial Government.

On arrival at Kioto I had the honour of presenting my letters of credence to the Emperor and of being received, with my wife, by the Empress. Both Their Majesties gave us a most gracious reception, expressing their satisfaction at welcoming us back to Japan. The welcome I met with at the hands of the members of the Government, as well as of many old-time friends, was just as cordial as in former days. But in the social atmosphere an under-current made itself felt, not exactly of hostility or suspicion, but rather of apprehensive expectancy. However, the first months after our arrival passed off very peacefully without any untoward incidents. There even seemed to be a kind of relapse into less strained relations when the coming visit of our Minister of War, General Kuropatkin, was announced. He was known to the Japanese, who were always exceedingly well informed on political conditions in Russia, as no friend of Witte's, but as being equally opposed to the policy of the Bezobrazoff clique, which was becoming every day more influential. It was, perhaps, owing to this circumstance, which may have revived the hopes of those statesmen among the "genro" who favoured a friendly understanding with Russia, that the reception extended to the General was marked by the most elaborate courtesy and apparently sincere cordiality. He arrived accompanied by a large and brilliant suite, and the same reserve palace which several years before had sheltered the Grand Duke Cyril had been prepared for him. After his audience with the Emperor he was entertained at a state banquet at the palace in the presence of Their Majesties, the Imperial Princes and Princesses, and the Ministers of State. He was shown a review of a brigade of guards, an exhibition drill of the training school for cavalry

officers, with whose efficiency and skill in various horseback exercises and "stunts" he seemed to have been much impressed, and so forth. When the term fixed for his official stay at Tokio, during which he had interviews with some of the leading statesmen of Japan, had expired, and he was on the point of starting for Port Arthur to complete his tour of inspection of the troops stationed in the Far East, he received by telegraph from St. Petersburg an intimation that it was the Emperor's wish that he should not arrive at Port Arthur before the arrival of Secretary of State Bezobrazoff, whom he was to meet there for a conference with Admiral Alexeeff. This extraordinary circumstance requires some further explanation, as it placed the General in a most embarrassing situation. It was, of course, impossible for him to prolong his stay in the capital beyond the term originally fixed for his official sojourn, and so he chose to retire to some seaside place not far from Tokio under the pretext that he needed rest which he expected to find in the pursuit of his favourite sport of fishing. The explanation of this remarkable state of affairs had to be sought for in certain developments which in the meantime had been taking place at St. Petersburg. The rising of the new star, Bezobrazoff, and the growth of his influence at Court had been phenomenally rapid, so much so that the Emperor had seen fit to confer on him, although he had no official status in the service, the title of His Majesty's Secretary of State, a purely honorific distinction reserved, as a reward of long and distinguished services, for a very few only of the highest dignitaries of the State. This distinction conferred on an entire outsider placed him in the eyes of the bureaucracy on an exalted pedestal as the latest favourite of the Sovereign, and correspondingly increased his influence in the political affairs in which he was empowered to take an active part. He had determined to start on a personal tour of investigation of the condition of things in the Far East, and at the time of General Kuropatkin's visit in Japan was travelling in almost royal state in a magnificent special train on his way to Port Arthur. The Minister of War being known as an adversary of Bezobrazoff's plans, it was apparently apprehended that he might possibly, if he were allowed to reach Port Arthur before Bezobrazoff's arrival, succeed in allying himself with Admiral Alexeeff



in opposition to the latter's projects and thus encompass their defeat. Hence the order which delayed General Kuropatkin's departure from Japan.

In this connection I must mention a circumstance that set me thinking at the time. Among the members of the suite of General Kuropatkin was a staff officer of high rank and certainly one of the ablest in our military service, whom I had known before and whose knowledge of Far Eastern affairs I valued very highly. He came to see me as an old friend on the very day of their arrival, and after some friendly chat he began holding forth on the interesting and important features of the Yalou enterprise as a screen behind which we could in safety mature our political plans in Manchuria and so on, all in the same order of ideas. The very earnestness with which he pleaded for a cause of which he must have known I had declared myself a firm and convinced adversary made me suspect that he might have been commissioned to try to bring me round to the Bezobrazoff clique's views, my opposition to which they would naturally wish to eliminate as a disturbing element capable of obstructing their plans to some extent. So I pretended to take it as a friendly attempt on his part at pulling my leg, so to speak, and laughingly said that being a mere *ignoramus* in matters of strategy the screen theory was too deep for me. What his relations with General Kuropatkin were and what the reason was for his presence as one of the members of his suite I did not care to investigate. But it may well be that he had been entrusted likewise with the task of keeping a watchful eye on the General as well as on another adversary of the Yalou enterprise.

In the sequel another circumstance made me conceive certain suspicions, which, however, were confirmed in a measure only much later. In the summer a young officer of the guards accompanied by his wife arrived at Yokohama for a prolonged stay. His wife was a most charming and distinguished young woman, belonging to the best society at St. Petersburg, and the young couple were frequent guests at our Legation. But I never could discover any rational explanation for their arrival and prolonged stay in Japan, nor what the mysterious business was in which he seemed to be engaged, until I found out much later, after their departure,



that he was the son of one of the chief promoters of the Yalou enterprise. I have every reason to suspect that his business, besides perhaps keeping track of the dispositions of the Japanese Press, consisted mainly in watching in the interest of the company my political activity.

I have been dwelling at such length on the circumstances related above because they illustrate the extraordinary muddle to which divided counsels at headquarters had reduced our policy in the Far East. They also throw some light on the difficulties of my position as representative of a Government divided against itself, as an agent in disfavour with his direct chief and the powerful statesman whose mouthpiece he was, suspected and watched by the rival clique whose power and influence seemed to be in the ascendant, therefore deprived of any kind of backing and obliged to rely on nothing more substantial than a "scrap of paper" in the shape of my letter of credence and such modest personal credit as I might be able to command. Such was my position, being accredited to a Government perfectly well informed of all these circumstances as a negotiator, of whom it was expected that he would succeed in preventing the armed conflict towards which the course of events, misdirected by erratic policies, was manifestly tending.

In one respect only was I greatly favoured, and that was in the composition of the staff of the Legation and of the personnel of the Consulates under my orders. To the patriotism, fidelity and devotion to duty and loyalty to their chief of all these faithful public servants it gives me great satisfaction to bear witness on these pages. Of particularly valuable assistance to me were the representatives of the Navy and Army, our naval agent Captain (now Admiral) Roussin, and our military agent, Colonel Samoyloff (since deceased), thanks to whose efficient and zealous collaboration I was always kept most accurately informed in regard to all naval and military affairs in Japan—under the circumstances a matter of supreme importance. Not long after the departure of General Kuropatkin, we moved for the summer to Nikko, a beautiful place in a mountainous country some two hours by train from Tokio, where I could be in constant touch with the Legation. In olden days, when I first came to Japan, Nikko could be reached only by jinriksha

or on horseback, through a grandiose avenue some twenty-eight miles long of centuries-old cryptomeria trees planted in double rows leading up to the numerous magnificent shrines and sepulchres of the Shoguns of the Tokugawa Dynasty. One of the numberless derelicts of the great upheaval which had wrecked the fortunes of their class was the aged head of the Kanaya family who were the owners of the hotel at Nikko where we had taken up our quarters for the summer. A dignified old gentleman, with polished manners, he had evidently been a Samurai of high rank and had taken to the hotel business as a means of livelihood. His son spoke and wrote English fluently and managed the hotel in a very businesslike and at the same time gentlemanly way, which earned him a wide popularity in the foreign colonies of Tokio and Yokohama and helped to keep the family exchequer in a flourishing condition. The Kanaya Hotel stood—or rather stands, as I hope it is still there—by the side of a mountain brook spanned, almost under our windows, by the celebrated sacred red lacquer bridge over which no one is allowed to pass except the Emperor. On the other side of the rivulet was a large park surrounding the numerous temples and shrines of the burial grounds of the Tokugawa Dynasty. Being greatly interested in Japanese antiquities we were frequent visitors to these sacred grounds, and were always very courteously received by the priests and permitted to inspect everything we wished to see.

Whilst I was idling away my time in lovely Nikko, I was well aware that some negotiations were being carried on behind my back between the Japanese Minister at St. Petersburg, Mr. Kurino, an old friend of mine, and Count Lamsdorff, our Minister of Foreign Affairs. In Japan, however, everything seemed to be perfectly calm, at least on the surface, until two events occurred in Russia which produced in Japan an impression reflected in a markedly alarmist undertone perceptible in the utterances of the Press. These events were : the fall from power of Witte as Minister of Finance, and the creation of the Viceroyalty of the Far East with Admiral Alexeeff as Viceroy.

Being so far away from the centre of intrigues, I could not, of course, be certain as to the immediate cause that had brought about this upheaval in the bureaucratic world of

St. Petersburg. It might have been the return of Bezobrazoff from his tour of inspection in the Far East with encouraging reports regarding the political situation, or possibly an accretion of his influences due to the support of some new and powerful element. The latter supposition I thought the most likely, as the creation of the Viceroyalty and the simultaneous appointment of a special "Committee of Far Eastern Affairs," evidently intended to paralyse the influence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to obstruct its action, seemed to disclose unmistakable traces of the participation of the "fine Italian hand" of an old stager well versed in bureaucratic intrigue. Knowing that Witte's only serious adversary—because the only other able personage in the Government—was the Minister of the Interior, Plehwe. I had the strongest suspicion that he had had a hand in the game that led to the downfall of his powerful rival. But this motive of personal rivalry could hardly have been the only one that had caused him to side with the Bezobrazoff clique. As a very intelligent man, he could not have failed to realize that our whole Far Eastern policy, of which the Yalou enterprise was one of the most disquieting features, was bound to land us in the end in an armed conflict with Japan. It seemed, therefore, hardly credible that he should have encouraged such a policy unless he had thought that a bloodletting in the Far East, whatever its outcome, would prove an effective cure of the revolutionary disease affecting the body politic for the sanitation of which it was his duty to provide. I may have done him an injustice in suspecting him of having been capable of so much Macchiavellism, since I could only judge from appearances and such facts as were of public notoriety. I can say, however, that the above explanation of his attitude was pretty generally accredited among people who were in a position to know the inside history of this sensational bureaucratic shake-up. Plehwe, with whom I had never had any personal contact whatever, never having met him in society, was generally considered to have been a man of great ability, firm will and undaunted courage, determined to carry on the war against the revolutionary parties with unrelenting energy to the bitter end. That by them he was held to be a most redoubtable enemy is sufficiently proved by the fact that,



from the very beginning of his short career as Minister of the Interior, he had been singled out by the Social Revolutionary terrorists as a victim of their murderous policy. His assassination was actually encompassed in the first year of the war, under the direction—if rumour is to be believed—of one of the leaders of the Social Revolutionary party who later on occupied an important post in the Kerensky Cabinet, and is said to be sitting now on the Board of the so-called Russian Committee in Paris.

Howsoever the fall from power of Witte was brought about, it was plain that it meant the triumph of an aggressive policy in the Far East. But it was no less plain that the installation of a "Viceroy of the Far East" and the institution of the special "Committee of Far Eastern Affairs"—both with extensive powers conflicting not only with those of the regular diplomacy, but also as between themselves—were bound to complicate to an extraordinary degree and thereby to render impossible a rational conduct of such a policy. The Viceroy, Admiral Alexeeff, was raised to a position of semi-independence as Commander-in-Chief of all the armed forces, naval as well as military, within the immense territory placed under his supreme authority, which of course extended to the civil administration as well. He was also entrusted with the control of diplomatic relations with neighbouring countries in the Far East and the Legations at Tokio. Peking and Seoul were to some extent subordinated to his authority and ordered to report to him on such matters. The intention seemed to have been to place him, in regard to international politics, in a position similar to that of the Governor-General of Turkestan in his relations with semi-independent native States such as Bokhara and Afghanistan, an arrangement which, apparently assimilating Japan to these central Asian border States, could not but be extremely galling to Japanese pride. On the other hand, the special "Committee of Far Eastern Affairs," under the nominal presidency of the Emperor, was to be the supreme authority over the whole field of our Far Eastern policy. This Committee, of which the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance, War and Marine were ex-officio members, their membership, however, being more or less nominal, was practically directed by Rear-Admiral Abaza, who enjoyed the Emperor's special



confidence. He was an excellent naval officer and a very intelligent man, but, of course, totally inexperienced in international affairs, and therefore quite incompetent to advise the Sovereign at a critical moment in the country's history, evidently much more so than the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Lamsdorff, who possessed at least the advantage of a long experience in diplomacy.

Such was the situation in August 1903, when the Japanese Government, under the supreme guidance of some of the ablest statesmen of the age who had been the creators of modern Japan and were untrammelled by any pressure from above or below, began the negotiations which were to lead to the outbreak of the war. Their policy was clearly defined and limited to what at the time was practically attainable and commensurate with the means at their disposal. Their immediate aims were the ousting of Russia from Korea, and if possible from Manchuria as well, and the establishment of a Japanese protectorate over Korea, leaving for developments in the future all ultimate aims such as the final annexation of Korea, the gradual absorption of Manchuria and other ambitious plans in regard to China. They had secured the moral and diplomatic support not only of their ally Great Britain but also of the United States, by pretending to combat for the cause of the independence and integrity of Korea and China, which were threatened by Russia, and of the "open door" in Manchuria, which Russia intended to close. They could rely on the complete preparedness of their Army and Navy. They were already in a fair way, as I found out accidentally, of securing likewise the financial backing of some banking circles in New York. But, most important of all, they could rely on the unanimous enthusiastic support of an intensely patriotic, entirely homogeneous nation, conscious of the real meaning of the impending conflict as a crucial struggle for supremacy.

What, then, had we to oppose to these multiple elements of success on our adversary's side? Total absence of any clearly defined aims, harmonized with the general political needs and interests of the country, and calculated on the solid basis of available resources. Nothing but vague aspirations after domination and hegemony. Neither clear insight, nor firm will at the top. The conduct of our Far

Eastern policy divided between three separate authorities, more or less independent of each other and never agreeing completely on anything: the only legitimate one, but the weakest, because almost openly distrusted by the Sovereign—the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*; the ablest, and by far the most enlightened, but hampered by considerations of loyalty to the Throne—the *Viceroy*; the strongest, because nearest to the supreme authority—the *Committee of Far Eastern Affairs*. Irremediable military and naval unpreparedness, because no timely and adequate reinforcements could be forwarded to our Army and Navy in the Far East without laying us open to the suspicion of deliberately preparing an attack and thereby hastening the outbreak of war. Diplomatic unpreparedness as well, considering that our only ally, France, could not possibly be expected to give us anything but a very lukewarm support, as it was manifestly not to her interest to encourage us to lay fast in the Far East our political interests, let alone our armed forces, which would impair our value as an ally on the field of European politics and the more so in case of the ever-expected war with Germany. Great Britain and the United States, the two Powers most vitally interested in Far Eastern trade, recklessly antagonized by our senseless dog-in-the-manger policy in Manchuria. But, worst of all, no comprehension of the meaning of a conflict with Japan could possibly be hoped for from the ignorant and inarticulate masses of the people who would be expected to shed their blood for such a cause. Nor was it possible to count on the moral support of the educated classes, who in their overwhelming majority were opposed to any adventurous policy in the Far East, partly because they felt that Russia's real and vital interest was peace, partly because they were wedded to the policy from which they expected the realization of their political dreams in Europe. The revolutionary parties, as always, were merely watching and waiting for an opportunity to overthrow the existing social order, weakened by defeat and consequent popular discontent, for the purpose of founding on its ruins—on the ruins of their country—their socialistic Utopia.

These were the conditions under which we were approaching the crisis in our Far Eastern affairs. It was not difficult to predict the outcome of the negotiations just

begun as well as of the war that was to follow, and to foresee that the curtain was going to rise on the first act of what was to be the awful tragedy of a great Empire's downfall and ruin.

The negotiations were initiated by Japan in the beginning of August 1903, and the Japanese Government naturally intended that they should take place at St. Petersburg. To this, however, Count Lamsdorff demurred under various pretexts, and insisted on the negotiations being conducted at Tokio. In the end the Japanese Government reluctantly consented to this, so that during the last phase of the negotiations I served as the channel through which our Government's communications were transmitted to them, the Japanese Minister at St. Petersburg continuing in the meanwhile his fruitless *pourparlers* with Count Lamsdorff, and I have reason to believe, behind the latter's back with Admiral Abaza.

I cannot attempt to give here a detailed account of these prolonged negotiations. Divested of all verbiage and circumlocution, unavoidable in diplomatic fencing, the kernel of the whole matter could be reduced to these simple propositions: the Japanese Government was insisting on Russia entering into certain engagements in regard to Manchuria by way of exercising pressure on her to acquiesce in Japan's exclusive predominance in Korea; the Russian Government, on the other hand, was clinging to Russia's pretensions in Korea, presumably in the expectation of causing Japan by this means to withdraw her claim to exact from us engagements in regard to Manchuria. Neither side showing any inclination to recede from the position originally taken up, there was apparently no way out of the impasse thus created. The position of the Japanese Government, was, however much the stronger one, since they had the powerful support of Great Britain and the United States, where in our pretensions and attempts at interference with Japanese policy in Korea we could not hope for anybody's support, these pretensions being, moreover, quite unjustified, unless we were determined to return to Prince Lobanoff's policy of not allowing Japan to gain any foothold on the Asiatic continent. But in that case we should have tried to secure English and American support for such a policy while it was yet time; that is to say, before the conclusion of the



Anglo-Japanese Alliance. In view of recent developments, English and American statesmen might perhaps ask themselves the question whether in this matter of Far Eastern policy their Governments had not all the time been backing the wrong horse. Besides, I did not quite understand the reason of our Government's persistent reluctance to abandon once for all the pursuit of their disastrous Korean policy. It certainly could not have been the wish to safeguard, even at the risk of war, the interests of the Yalou timber enterprise. There must surely have been a deeper motive for the Government's attitude, influenced, as it evidently was, by the Emperor's personal views and wishes. The Emperor's verbal promise to accept the protectorate over Korea—to which I have alluded before—may have had something to do with it. This I am not in a position either to affirm or deny, as in such of our secret archives as I had access to there was no documentary evidence to be found establishing the fact of such a promise actually having been made. Such evidence, however, may have existed in the reports of the Korean Ambassador to his Government, and having come to the knowledge of the Japanese Government, may have powerfully contributed to their determination to bring the Korean question to a head and to prevent the threatened establishment of a Russian protectorate by assuming the protectorate over Korea themselves. This secret motive, necessarily carefully concealed from their Western sympathizers, evidently was the mainspring of the Japanese Government's policy. It may well be that a similar secret motive—I mean the desire to redeem a promise made, however inconsiderately, assuming that such a promise had actually been made—was ever present in the Emperor's mind and influenced his actions. There was nothing in this secret motive but what was noble and worthy of a great Sovereign—the idea that a Sovereign's word, once given, should never be repudiated.

Desultory *pourparlers* were lagging along in St. Petersburg between Count Lamsdorff and the Japanese Minister, until at last the Japanese Government, upon the advice of Mr. Kurino, consented in the beginning of September to the transfer of the negotiations to Tokio. Their long hesitation, I had every reason to suppose, had been due in a great



measure to their knowledge of the fact that I was not in favour at our Foreign Department and did not enjoy the full confidence of the Minister. They therefore very naturally suspected that Count Lamsdorff's insistence on the transfer of the negotiations to Tokio as well as his constant references in his conversations with the Japanese Minister to the necessity of consulting on every subject, either me or the Viceroy, or both, were nothing but a device to gain time for the completion of our armaments which it was evidently not to their interest to await. Their final consent to the transfer of the negotiations may have been due to the discovery that no serious steps were being taken by us to reinforce our troops in Manchuria beyond the despatch to the Manchurian frontier of a brigade of infantry under the pretext of a test of the speed with which troops could be transported over the Siberian railroad. Shortly afterwards I received the Emperor's command to hold myself in readiness to proceed to Port Arthur, if and when the Viceroy should see fit to consult me on the subject of the pending negotiations, he being entrusted with the formulation of our counter-proposals to the original Japanese proposals. Towards the end of the month I received the expected invitation from the Viceroy, who sent the cruiser *Rurik* to Nagasaki to be at my disposal. In connection with this I must mention a small matter symptomatic of our state of unpreparedness for anything like war and consequently of the total absence on our part of any warlike intentions. When we were nearing Port Arthur the captain told me that he had just despatched a wireless message to the Viceroy to inform him of the hour of our expected arrival in port, as he wished to meet me on landing as an old friend of younger days. When I walked unannounced into Admiral Alexeeff's library he was not a little astonished and indignant at this message never having reached him. Upon immediate inquiry it was reported to him that the wireless apparatus at the receiving station was out of order.

As I could stay only forty-eight hours at Port Arthur, we lost no time in proceeding to discuss the political situation. I told the Viceroy frankly that as far as I could judge the Japanese Government were determined to secure the exclusive control of Korea, by negotiation, if possible, if not, then by

force of arms; that they were sure of the moral support of the Western Powers for whose benefit they were pretending that they were defending the independence and integrity of Korea and China against Russian aggression; that we could not possibly hope to retain our position in Korea as well as in Manchuria; that in my opinion the only rational thing we could do now would be to stick to Manchuria and scuttle from Korea; that any further shilly-shallying could do no good, because the Japanese were afraid we might take advantage of any further delay for the purpose of reinforcing our Army and Navy and strengthening our fortifications, and they were therefore determined to press the matter to an issue as soon as possible. We might expect any day to find ourselves confronted with an ultimatum: sign or fight, or, worse still, be surprised by a sudden unheralded attack which would find us unprepared. I do not know whether I succeeded in convincing him, although I suspect that he was inclined to share my views but was not at liberty to act upon them. He certainly felt deeply the grave responsibility resting upon him and fully realized the great danger of the exposed position in which he found himself, and which he would have to defend with entirely inadequate forces. He spoke very openly of all the difficulties he had to contend with from all the Government departments ever since he had been raised to the exalted position of Viceroy, which he had done everything he could to escape and which had raised against him the usual abundant crop of jealousy and antagonism. He showed me the text of his telegram sent in reply to the Emperor's offer of the post of Viceroy, accompanied by an appeal to his patriotism in demanding its acceptance. In his reply Admiral Alexeeff, in terms at once loyal, respectful and earnest, entreated the Emperor not to insist on appointing him to a position to which he did not feel himself able to do justice. He asked me what I thought of it, and I told him frankly that I thought he would have done better in his own interest, no less than from a patriotic point of view, if, instead of pleading the traditional *nolo episcopari*, he had expressed his conviction that the policy, the meaning of which the intended creation of the Viceroyalty of the Far East was bound to accentuate, could only be pursued if supported by adequate forces; that is to say, an army of three hundred

thousand men and the greater part of the best fighting units of the Baltic fleet, and that therefore he entreated the Emperor not to insist on burdening him with a responsibility he could not conscientiously undertake. From what I could see myself during my two days' stay at Port Arthur I could not draw any reassuring conclusions as to the state of our preparedness for war. Aside from the state of the fortifications on which, of course, only a military specialist could express an opinion, there were two glaring defects which could not escape the notice of the most superficial civilian observer. They were : first, the very cramped space available in the eastern basin of the harbour for the accommodation of the comparatively large fleet, owing to the failure to provide in time for the deepening of the western basin, combined with the absence of an additional outlet to the open sea ; and second, the absence of adequate docking facilities, there being only one dry dock and that of too small dimensions to admit of the introduction of the larger fighting units of the fleet. All these defects could easily have been corrected during the five years that we had been in possession of Port Arthur if the needed works had been taken in hand in time. I had no time to visit Dalny, the creation of Witte, but what I saw of Port Arthur impressed me greatly at first. There was something in the atmosphere of the place that reminded one of a " booming " new town in the Far West, life and bustle and buoyant activity on all sides, a seemingly great promise for the future ; but one could not help realizing that all this was more or less artificial, born of and fed by the abundant golden stream issuing from our Treasury ; that is to say, ultimately from the lean purses of a penurious people whose real needs remained unsatisfied.

Our conferences on the subject of the counter-proposals to be made to the Japanese resulted, as was to be expected under the circumstances, in nothing of any real value. We maintained our original position in regard to the exclusion of all reference to Manchuria from the scope of the projected agreement, and offered some slight concessions in regard to Korea. These counter-proposals were naturally considered unsatisfactory, and so negotiations continued, the Japanese proposals being transmitted always to Count Lamsdorff direct through Mr. Kurino, and our Government's counter-proposals



reaching the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs exclusively through me. After my return from Port Arthur I noticed a marked change in the tone of the Japanese Press, whose utterances were usually in harmony with the changing views of the Government. In this respect the Japanese Press displayed a patriotic and unanimous readiness to take its cue from the Government's lead. It also avoided any abusive and offensive expressions and Russia was hardly ever mentioned by name, but usually spoken of as "a certain Power." There was another circumstance which made me realize that the strain of the political situation was beginning to tell on the popular mind. That was the fact of which at first I was not aware, that unusual precautions were being taken to ensure my personal safety. It was my habit to go every afternoon at about five o'clock to the Tokio Club for a chat or a game of billiards with my Japanese friends. The club-house being situated about half a mile from our Legation, at the bottom of a street in which there was no traffic and hardly any passer-by to be met, I used to go and return from there always on foot. After a while I began to notice a certain number of individuals, always the same, whom I met every day and always more or less at the same spots on my way to and from the club. Some were dressed as labourers, some as "jinriksha coolies," some in Japanese costumes with bowler hats, others in foreign clothes, one of them even in a frock coat and silk hat. By and by I began to recognize some of them and pass them by with a smile, to which they would respond with a polite bow and statutory grin of courtesy. When I incidentally mentioned these casual encounters to one of my Japanese friends over a game of pool, he laughed and said: "You have been pretty long in finding out that your obsequious friends you meet every day on your way here are all detectives; they are clever, I can tell you, and all chosen from among the best in the police department, and their duty is to watch over your safety."

While the fruitless negotiations between the two Powers were going on, our Government had at last bethought itself of the advisability of reinforcing our fleet in the Far East, and a few ships under the command of Rear-Admiral Wirenius were on their way to Japan, and had in the beginning of January 1904 passed the Suez Canal. They had, however,



been preceded by two new cruisers originally built at Genoa for the Argentine Government, which the Japanese had bought and which were hurrying to Japan under the command of English officers and with English crews. It was plain to me that Japan would not await the arrival of Admiral Wirenius's small squadron before beginning hostilities, and this was also the opinion of our naval agent, who was particularly well informed in regard to Japanese preparations for war.

All the doubts I might still have entertained in this regard were set at rest when in one of our frequent and always perfectly calm and courteous interviews Baron Komura lost his temper, and in reply to a remark of mine that we would not be able to accept a proposal he had just made, said: "But we might compel you," with a look in his eyes which told me as plainly as if he had uttered the words, that the final decision had been taken.

There remained only one chance. It was plain that all along there had been grave dissensions between members of the Government and the "genro" as well as among the "genro" themselves, in regard to the momentous question of peace or war, and that there was a strong party which had been holding out to the last for a friendly understanding with Russia. If the final decision in favour of war had already been taken, as I was led to suppose by Baron Komura's attitude, the only possible chance of a reversal of this decision lay in strengthening the hands of the party which had been standing for a peaceful solution of the crisis, at the head of which I hoped to find two such powerful statesmen as Marquis Ito and Count Inouyé. This could only be accomplished by a complete surrender of our position, so obstinately maintained in regard to Korea. It was an off-chance indeed. But it must not be forgotten that although Russia's military weakness was suspected by the Japanese, and their confidence in victory was great, still our potential might loomed threateningly large, and the fate of the whole campaign depended on one slender and uncertain thread—the possibility of securing at the first stroke absolute command of the sea. I determined therefore on one last attempt at making our Government realize the full gravity of the situation, and I despatched the same evening a telegram to Count Lamsdorff, representing to him the absolute necessity of immediately

proposing the return to the original offer of the Japanese Government, made in March 1898, implying the complete surrender of all our pretensions in Korea, if we wished to avail ourselves of the only remaining chance of preventing the outbreak of war.

No attention was apparently paid to this telegram, as it remained unanswered. After a couple of weeks more of a fruitless exchange of proposals and counter-proposals, I received in the afternoon of Saturday, February 6, 1904, a message from Baron Komura requesting me to call at his official residence at four o'clock. He received me with a mien of unusual gravity, which made it plain to me that the fatal hour had struck. After we were seated he proceeded to say that the Japanese Government, having come to the conclusion that it would be purposeless to continue long futile negotiations, had determined to break them off, at the same time severing diplomatic relations with Russia; that the Japanese Minister at St. Petersburg was at the same hour acquainting the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs with this decision of the Japanese Government; that Mr. Kurino was under orders to depart from Russia at the earliest possible date with the staff of the Legation and the Consulates; that he was aware that at the moment there was no outgoing steamer available, and that I therefore should be compelled to delay for some days my departure with my family, the staff of the Legation and the personnel of the Consulates, but that I need have no apprehension on that account, as measures would be taken to guarantee our safety.

I rose immediately and said that I regretted to find that our negotiations had come to naught and that the Japanese Government had decided on war. To this he demurred, saying that he had merely announced the rupture of diplomatic relations. Thereupon, after an exchange of formal salutations, I withdrew.

On my return to the Legation I was met by our naval attaché with the report that at 6 a.m. that morning the Japanese fleet had weighed anchor for an unknown destination, divided in two squadrons, one of which was convoying transports having on board two divisions of troops, evidently destined to be landed on the Korean coast, probably at some point on the west coast of the peninsula. The other

squadron was no less evidently destined to attack our fleet, which was at anchor in the outer roadstead of Port Arthur, a fact which was known to the Japanese.

It became, therefore, of supreme importance to give the Viceroy timely warning of the attack he had to expect. Of course the necessary telegrams were immediately put in cipher and addressed to Port Arthur and St. Petersburg. Equally of course, none of them ever reached their destination, the Japanese Government having naturally suspended for some time the forwarding of any telegrams addressed to foreign countries, as everything depended on the success of this attack, which could only succeed by surprise. It was maddening to realize one's absolute helplessness at this critical moment, which was about to determine more or less irrevocably the fate of the whole campaign. As a matter of fact, on the following Monday the news was received of the destruction by the Japanese fleet of two of our small cruisers in the roads of Chemulpo, and on Tuesday came the fatal news of the night attack by Japanese torpedo-boats on our fleet at Port Arthur, and of the putting out of commission of three of our best fighting units, the rest having sought shelter in the inner harbour. The reason why this surprise attack was able to be successfully carried out I learned on our return to St. Petersburg. I shall refer to it in the next chapter.

The five days' wait until our departure could be effected was extremely painful, rendered doubly so by the receipt of such disastrous news. Every now and then during these days excited crowds would collect outside the Legation shouting defiance and imprecations, but were always promptly dispersed by the police and troops who guarded us most efficiently.

On the Sunday following my last interview with Baron Komura a touching incident took place. My wife was alone in her drawing-room when the arrival of the Grand Mistress of the Empress's household was announced. She said that she had been commissioned by the Empress to express Her Majesty's profound sorrow at seeing us depart under such painful circumstances, and that she begged my wife to accept from her a small souvenir in remembrance of our sojourn in Japan. This souvenir consisted of two small flower vases



in silver, adorned with the Imperial Arms. My wife felt at first a little embarrassed, but of course accepted this small gift in the spirit in which it was offered, and asked the Grand Mistress to transmit to the Empress her warm thanks for Her Majesty's kind remembrance.

Our departure was finally fixed for the 11th at 11 p.m. On the morning of that day one of my colleagues, a very old friend of mine, brought me a message from Marquis Ito, who regretted that in his official position it was impossible for him to come himself to bid me good-bye, and that he wished me to know that up to the very last moment he had been struggling for the cause of peace, and that he earnestly hoped to see our former friendly relations renewed in the nearest possible future.

Baron d'Anethan's visit was followed by that of Admiral Viscount Enomoto, who had been years ago the first Japanese Minister at St. Petersburg, where I had befriended him. He was very old, living retired in the country some miles from Tokio, and had risen from a sick-bed to come to bid me a last farewell before he died.

On the appointed day, at eleven o'clock in the evening, the carriages and escort who were to take us to the station, appeared in the forecourt of the Legation. We drove through the streets surrounded by a squadron of cavalry, every precaution having been taken to guard us from insult or molestation. We found the entrance to the station surrounded by troops in a wide circle, no one being allowed to pass except the carriages of official people. On the platform the whole diplomatic body was awaiting our arrival to bid us good-bye—and all the dignitaries of the Imperial Court, with their ladies as well.

Such was the send-off chivalrous Japan gave to the representative of a country with which it was at war.

The world seems to have progressed since then !



## CHAPTER XXIII

Departure from Japan—Anti-Russian feeling—Japanese attack on our fleet—Interview with the Emperor—Causes of the war—The Dogger Bank episode—Political situation in Russia.

WHEN our special train arrived at Yokohama at about midnight, we found the same ample precautions taken for our safety as at Tokio, and we were taken in Government carriages to the landing-stage where the French Messageries Maritimes steamer *Yarra* was moored. Although we had passed without any untoward incident through the ordeal of these five days in the enemy's capital, we felt inexpressibly relieved to be under the friendly shelter of our Ally's flag. Thanks to the kindness and courtesy of Mr. Harmand, the French Minister to Japan, most of the passenger accommodation on the *Yarra* had been reserved for our very large party, which included the personnel of our Consulates at Kobe and Nagasaki. During the long voyage to Marseilles we felt ourselves surrounded by an atmosphere of never-failing sympathy, which was extremely grateful to us under the painful circumstances of our slow progress towards home when at almost every port of call some cheerless news was awaiting us.

Before proceeding with my narrative, I must touch upon a delicate subject in connection with the question whether Japan was justified in proceeding to open acts of hostility before the official declaration of war had been made in due form. This disputed question was mostly decided in accordance with the degree of sympathy felt for one or the other of the belligerents. In this respect we were labouring under a considerable disadvantage due to causes partly of our own making, partly resulting from the position Russia had come to occupy in world politics.

Considering that we were fighting with the rising Power of the yellow race, one might have expected that the sympathy

of all the nations of our own race, perhaps even including Japan's political ally, Great Britain, might have gone out to Russia as the champion of white mankind. Some traces of such a feeling were indeed perceptible—at least, that was my impression—among the foreign communities in Far Eastern ports to whom race feeling represented an element of immediate reality. Real feeling was shown by foreign sailors who witnessed the tragic destruction of our two small vessels by a powerful Japanese squadron in the harbour of Chemulpo on February 8, 1904. Officers of the French cruiser *Pascal*, which brought to Shanghai part of the survivors of the battle, related to me with profound emotion how the *Variag*, followed by the gunboat *Koreetz*, having accepted the Japanese Admiral's challenge, slowly steamed, colours flying, officers and men on parade, past the foreign men-of-war anchored in the roads, saluted by our national anthem, heroically going to meet certain destruction at the hands of the enemy who had spread the numerous and powerful vessels of his squadron in a wide semicircle rendering escape a matter of utter impossibility. Nothing on that occasion could have exceeded the chivalrous attitude of the captain of the British man-of-war, who, as ranking officer, after consultation with the commanders of the other foreign vessels present, did not hesitate to send a vigorous written protest to the Japanese Admiral, which was delivered when the battle was already raging by one of his officers, who went in a steam launch under cross-fire to board the Japanese flagship.

But barring similar spontaneous manifestations of sympathy on special occasions, it must be owned that the general public feeling, when not expressive of perfunctory lukewarm support, was everywhere arraigned against us, even in America, where we would least have expected it. To some extent this was probably due to the apparently glaring disproportion of the forces of the combatants, which naturally, as a purely sporting proposition, enlisted the sympathies of neutral onlookers on what seemed to be the weaker side. Mainly, however, we had but ourselves to blame for having created around us an atmosphere of jealousy, distrust and hardly concealed ill-will. The bungling and provocative way in which we had conducted our aggressive Far Eastern

policy, inaugurated since the advent of the new reign, after thirteen years of wise reserve under Alexander III, was certainly not apt to earn us the esteem, let alone the sympathy, of the onlooking world, not to mention our rivals in the same field. We kept muddling along, blissfully oblivious of the fact that the immense size of our country, its teeming population steeped in ignorance, its shocking political backwardness, its apparently overshadowing military power, were alone sufficient to cause us to be looked upon with suspicion and apprehension as a potential menace to the peace and civilization of Europe. As one of my colleagues used to put it :

“ We represent in the European menagerie the elephant. So long as he is content to let his enormous bulk rest quietly on his powerful legs solidly planted on the ground and confines himself to meditatively swinging his trunk from side to side, he is surrounded by the respectful consideration of the other animals. But let him only show signs of an intention to move, and you will see all those who know not where he will step next, and who are apprehensive of being trampled under his heavy feet, combine against him in a solid phalanx.”

Something of the kind we experienced at the time of the Crimean War and at the Congress of Berlin. Besides, the attitude of our public opinion toward the rest of the world, as expressed in our Press—an attitude vacillating between servile subserviency and supercilious arrogance—was not calculated to raise us in the estimation of nations standing on a higher plane of culture and civilization, or to attract the sympathies of those we presumed to look upon as clients or poor relations to be humoured or bullied according to our sweet will. The real feelings toward us of the neutral nations were pretty fairly reflected in the view generally taken of the way in which the Japanese had opened hostilities, criticism being directed not against Japan, but against us for having been taken unawares in a matter on which practically depended the fate of the campaign.

As to the accusation brought by us against Japan of having made a sudden attack on our fleet at anchor in the outer roads of Port Arthur without having previously notified us that the rupture of diplomatic relations implied the beginning of hostilities, it will be necessary in common



fairness to both sides to establish first the actual facts in the case.

On February 3rd our fleet had left the inner harbour of Port Arthur, and after a short cruise at sea had come to anchor in the outer roadstead, prepared to go to sea again at any time. This was well known to the Japanese Government through their admirably organized and most efficient system of espionage.

These were the facts the Japanese had to face.

The conclusion to be drawn therefrom could obviously only be that the Viceroy, whom they knew to be a man of great intelligence, foreseeing the impending rupture and the intention of the Japanese to effect a landing somewhere on the coast of Korea or of Manchuria, was making ready to meet the Japanese fleet at sea, when its movements would be hampered by the necessity of protecting a convoy of a large number of transports with troops. If we consider that for Japan the question of making sure from the very outset of the undisputed command of the sea was, so to speak, a question of life or death, inasmuch as on it depended not only the issue of the war, but the very possibility of beginning and carrying on a campaign on the continent, it will be seen that the Japanese Government, having decided on war, were bound to manœuvre in such a way as to avoid the risk of having to fight our fleet on the high seas and so as to secure the possibility of dealing a first and decisive blow by a surprise attack on our fleet while at anchor. This was not an easy problem. To present in the usual way an ultimatum whose rejection would, of course, have been a foregone conclusion, would undoubtedly have caused the immediate putting to sea of our fleet to the exclusion of any possibility of a surprise attack. To proceed without further ado to such an attack without a previous rupture of diplomatic relations was undesirable because it might have been looked upon with disfavour by public opinion in neutral countries to the retention of whose good-will the Japanese Government attached the greatest importance. Besides, it might have failed quite accidentally, our fleet for some reason or other having left its anchorage. The problem, therefore, was to discover a device by which the rupture of diplomatic relations might be so announced to our Government as to leave the



impression that it might be meant merely as a last effort at bringing pressure to bear with a view to hastening the conclusion of an amicable agreement, and that, therefore, if a peaceable outcome were really desired, it would be necessary to refrain from any action capable of being interpreted in a warlike sense, such as our fleet putting to sea. In devising such a plan, expectations of its success were evidently based partly on the well-known love of peace, partly on the gullibility of the negotiator on our part who was supposed to be capable of swallowing the bait.

I leave out of account as quite immaterial the way in which the intended communication was imparted to me, since, being on the spot, I could not possibly be deceived, and steps had naturally been taken to prevent any warning from me reaching those for whom it would be intended. In pursuance of the plan devised, the Japanese Minister at St. Petersburg, Mr. Kurino, was ordered by cable, dated February 5th, to address to Count Lamsdorff simultaneously two notes to the following effect :

In the first note it was stated that " finding in their efforts no prospect of securing from the Imperial Russian Government an adhesion either to Japan's moderate and unselfish proposals, or to any other proposals likely to establish a firm and enduring peace in the Extreme East, the Imperial Government have no other alternative than to terminate the present futile negotiations. In adopting that course the Imperial Government reserve to themselves the right to take such independent action as they may deem best to consolidate and defend their menaced position, as well as to protect their established rights and legitimate interests."

In the second it was stated that " the Imperial Government of Japan, having exhausted without effect every means of conciliation with a view to the removal from their relations with the Imperial Russian Government of every cause for future complications, and finding that their just representations and unselfish proposals in the interest of a firm and lasting peace in the Extreme East are not receiving the consideration which is their due, have resolved to sever their diplomatic relations with the Imperial Russian Government, which for the reason named have ceased to possess any value. In further fulfilment of the command of his Government,

the undersigned has also the honour to announce to His Excellency, Count Lamsdorff, that it is his intention to take his departure from St. Petersburg with the staff of the Imperial Legation on the 10th instant."

The reader will observe the skilful wording of the last paragraph but one of this note in announcing the Japanese Government's "resolve to sever their diplomatic relations with the Imperial Russian Government, which . . . *have ceased to possess any value.*"

This seems to have been devised for the purpose of meeting any possible reproach of failure to notify our Government that the rupture of diplomatic relations was final and excluded the possibility of any further negotiations; that is to say, was equivalent to a declaration of the Japanese Government's intention to avail themselves then and there of the right they had reserved to themselves in their first note "to take such independent action," etc., in other words, to proceed to military operations. On the other hand, the omission in the second note of any mention of the simultaneous withdrawal of the Consulates was evidently intended to convey the impression that the rupture of diplomatic relations was only considered as a temporary measure, as had it been otherwise, the consular representatives would have been withdrawn at the same time as the Legation.

These two notes were personally presented to Count Lamsdorff on Saturday, February 6th, at 4 p.m.

Having stated—I believe with fairness and impartiality—the facts and possible arguments in support of the case of Japan, I must now plead for our side, and shall try to explain how it was that the surprise attack on our fleet at Port Arthur met with a success the Japanese themselves had certainly hoped for, but could by no means have regarded as a certainty. The facts were as follows:

As already stated, our fleet on February 3rd moved out of the inner harbour of Port Arthur, and after a short cruise anchored in the outer roads under orders to be ready for any emergency. That the emergency contemplated could only be the sudden outbreak of war with Japan was plain enough from the fact that the Viceroy was the supreme authority on the spot through whose hands passed all the official communications between the two Governments,

and that he, therefore, must be fully aware that a rupture was to be expected at any moment. That Admiral Alexeeff intended our fleet to go to sea immediately war had been declared, with a view to meet the Japanese fleet on the high seas, I can personally testify.

During my two days' stay at Port Arthur in September 1903 we had discussed this question exhaustively. The Viceroy shared my opinion that the Japanese would at once attempt to effect a landing in considerable force in Korea, and most probably at some point on the west coast of the peninsula, and he told me that he would order our fleet to try to intercept and engage in battle the Japanese fleet which would undoubtedly be found convoying troopships and would therefore be in a strategically inferior position. The Viceroy's plan was evidently well conceived, and if it had been possible to carry it out the moment the rupture of diplomatic relations had taken place, it might have turned the tables and have profoundly affected the issue of the war. What is said here is not meant to put the blame for the failure to have made any attempt to carry out the Viceroy's plan on Admiral Starck who was in command of the fleet. Neither is it meant to palliate the latter's neglect to take sufficient precautions against attack by torpedo boats, although his relaxed vigilance may have been partly due to the same cause which, as will be shown below, prevented Admiral Alexeeff from immediately ordering the fleet out to sea according to his original intention.

Turning to what was taking place at the same time at St. Petersburg, we find that the Japanese Minister had presented—which can only mean “handed personally”—to Count Lamsdorff the two notes he had been instructed to address to him. It is evident, therefore, that a personal interview had taken place between them on the fateful February 6th. What passed between them on that occasion and what further explanations, if any, had been proffered by the Japanese Minister, I am unable to say, as, on my return to St. Petersburg, I received from Count Lamsdorff a reception which rendered it impossible for me to question him on this or any other subject. It has, however, been asserted and generally believed that Mr. Kurino had addressed to him a private letter in which he was supposed to have said,



in expressing his regret at the interruption of diplomatic relations between the two countries, that he earnestly wished and hoped for their speedy resumption. Whether such a letter was ever written by Mr. Kurino I am unable either to affirm or to deny. I have never come across any documentary evidence of its existence. But it has been said that it had been mainly instrumental in confirming Count Lamsdorff in the belief that it was still possible to come to terms by ample concessions and thereby to avoid the threatened outbreak of war. And this was said to have been the reason that prompted him to insist on categorical instructions being telegraphed to the Viceroy to refrain from any act that might be interpreted as a beginning of hostilities on our part. It was these telegraphic instructions, received by him at the same time as the announcement of the rupture of diplomatic relations, which prevented Admiral Alexeeff from ordering the fleet out to sea. He might, of course, have disregarded them and followed his own plan. But then that would have meant shouldering the responsibility for having defeated in advance any attempt at renewing the negotiations which the Central Government seemed to consider still possible—a responsibility which a patriot, conscious of our state of unpreparedness and of the very grave risk entailed in war with Japan, might justifiably have declined to assume.

Count Lamsdorff's complaint that the Japanese Government had failed to notify us that the rupture of diplomatic relations implied the beginning of warlike operations was a very lame excuse for having misjudged the situation and stayed the hand of the responsible authority at the front. It would not, indeed, have required superhuman sagacity to penetrate the obvious intention of the Japanese to deal us the first blow, a blow whose success was of supreme importance to them, but could only be rendered possible by surprise. The bitter reproaches heaped on Count Lamsdorff in this connection were hardly quite fair considering that, after all, no human being can give more than there is in him. It has been the cruel fate of our unfortunate country that on this occasion, as well as at the moment of the supreme crisis of the World War, when clear insight into actual conditions and statesmanlike provision of the future alone could save the country from disaster, the headship of our foreign depart-



ment should have been left to purblind incompetence and pompous self-sufficiency.

If I have dwelt at such length on the subject of the night attack on Port Arthur it is because its success, by crippling our fleet, deprived us from the outset of the use of a most important arm of defence, as well as of offence, and thereby practically determined the issue of the campaign. These and similar painful reflections I kept constantly revolving in my mind during our long voyage to Europe. There was only one consideration which seemed to offer solace to a mind haunted by the gravest apprehensions for Russia's future, and it was this :

Ever since the division of the Great Powers of Europe into two irreconcilably hostile camps had been completed by the conclusion of the Franco-Russian Alliance, I had felt convinced that a general European war could only be a question of time and that such a war would mean in every sense a catastrophe for Russia. It seemed to me that a war waged on the extreme confines of the Empire, and mainly on the territory of a neighbouring State, would be in the nature of a colonial war, and whatever its outcome, could not affect the destinies of the country as profoundly as would a disastrous war in Europe. It would, however, entail sacrifices of blood and treasure of such magnitude as to cause—at least I thought so then—our Government to realize the necessity of avoiding the ever-threatening catastrophe of a general European war, and consequently to comprehend the folly of persisting in a policy which could lead to no other result.

After this lengthy digression and brief allusion to questions of the utmost gravity, which I shall endeavour to treat exhaustively later on, it is high time to resume the thread of my narrative.

We left Yokohama Harbour on the morning following our installation on board the *Yarra*, and reached Kobe in the afternoon of the next day. As soon as we had come to anchor an official came on board with a message from the Governor to the effect that he had been ordered to place his carriage at my disposal in case I should wish to take a drive on shore with my family, an offer which I, of course, declined with thanks for the courteous intention. I mention this insignificant incident merely because it was symptomatic

of the spirit in which the Japanese Government intended to carry on the war. This spirit was also reflected in the behaviour of the people toward the head of our ecclesiastical mission, Archbishop Nicholas, who had elected to stay behind to minister to his numerous flock of Japanese orthodox Christians. Barring the first few days when excitement was running high, and he was requested not to leave the compound of the mission, throughout the war he moved about freely without molestation, nor was the teaching of the Russian language in his mission school interfered with. He also was permitted to visit from time to time the various camps where prisoners of war were interned, and to bring them, with the assistance of some orthodox Japanese priests, the consolations of their faith.

Having taken on board our Consuls and their families and the staffs of our Consulates at Kobe and Nagasaki, we proceeded to Shanghai. This was our first visit to the "Paris of the Far East," and we were much interested in visiting the foreign concessions as well as the overcrowded Chinese quarter with its teeming population.

On the day we left Shanghai the French cruiser *Pascal* arrived from Chemulpo, having on board the captain and most of the surviving officers and crew of the *Variag*, and I heard from their lips the tragic story of their heroic battle with a whole Japanese squadron. Our next port of call was Hong-Kong, where Admiral Howe, Commander-in-Chief of the British fleet in Far Eastern waters, came on board to see me and to express his warm sympathy on account of the brave fight our sailors had put up against overwhelming odds at Chemulpo. After leaving Shanghai we arrived for a two days' stay at Saigon, the capital of French Indo-China and of the Province of Cochin-China. On landing we were met by one of the Governor's A.D.C.'s, who told us that the Governor-General had given orders that we all should be put up at his palace, known as the "Palais du Grand Gouvernement," which turned out to be a perfect palace in fairy land, a veritable "palais des mille et une nuits," surrounded by a wonderful tropical garden. We were most hospitably entertained by the distinguished Governor and his charming wife, and were shown by everyone with whom we came in contact that exquisite courtesy the French know

so well how to bestow on their guests. After a short stop at Singapore we crossed the Indian Ocean bound for Colombo, Ceylon. There we were met by the Russian colony minus the Consul, who apparently was not on speaking terms with his compatriots. The whole colony consisted of the representative of the firm of the Brothers Popoff, multi-millionaire tea merchants of Moscow, and his staff of twelve clerks, all hailing from Moscow with the exception of one, who was a Russian-Englishman. I lunched with them in the firm's fine bungalow, while my family and the rest of our party went to the famous Gall Face Hotel on the seashore. My amiable hosts gave me some interesting information regarding the trade in Ceylon tea for the Russian market, which of late had grown to very large dimensions. So this is where some at least of the celebrated Russian "caravan" tea comes from, like our favourite "Dutch herrings," which, it appears, are caught by Norwegian fishermen somewhere near the coast of Scotland, and are said to be unknown in Holland. We took the usual drive to the cinnamon gardens, and on our way back a group of stark-naked little Cingalese boys kept running by the side of our carriages, chanting in the drollest way, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," in expectation of the probably usual shower of charitable pennies. We reached Marseilles safely without having experienced the violence of a "mistral," that most inhospitable wind said to be blowing frequently in that neighbourhood. While we were slowly approaching the quay, I was standing on the bridge and looking at the crowd of people watching the arrival of the steamer, when the captain pointed out to me a group of stylishly dressed gentlemen armed with notebooks and pencils, and said laughingly, "There are your enemies waiting for their prey."

Unfortunately, with all my sympathy for my future colleagues in the literary profession of which I have now, although rather late in the day, become a modest apprentice, I was bound to disappoint them, as it was, of course, impossible for me to give out anything for publication before I had reported to my Government. After a few days of rest in Paris we took the "Nord Express" for St. Petersburg.

When we were approaching St. Petersburg, at the station of Gatchina a friend of mine who had come from the Imperial



castle, the residence of the Empress Dowager, joined us in our sleeping-car and brought us the latest news and gossip of the capital. He warned me that I was in high disfavour at the Foreign Department—as I had fully expected—but told me at the same time that I need not worry on that account, as to judge from what he had heard at the castle the Emperor was very well disposed toward me. Both his warning as well as his encouragement proved to be well founded.

On arrival at St. Petersburg my first duty was to report to my chief and then to apply for an audience with the Emperor. I was notified of the hour when the Minister of Foreign Affairs would receive me. Count Lamsdorff met me with frigid courtesy, and I had barely taken the offered seat when, before I had uttered a single word, the door opened and a servant announced one of the foreign Ambassadors—evidently a preconcerted arrangement. The Count rose at once and asked to be excused, as he could not keep an Ambassador waiting. I replied that I would be at his disposal whenever he would find it convenient to send for me. He never did, and the next time I met him was more than a year later, when my appointment as Ambassador to the United States had been gazetted.

A very different reception awaited me at the Winter Palace. From the moment I had passed its threshold, I felt, from the attitude of the Court attendants, high and low, that the prevailing atmosphere was a very sympathetic one, reflecting the mood and disposition of the master. The Emperor received me in his private library—the same room where thirteen years later the preposterous Kerensky was said to have established his headquarters as ruler of the great Empire which he helped to destroy and of 150 million people he was to deliver into the satanic power of Bolshevism, civil war and utter ruin and despair. Nothing could have exceeded the graciousness with which His Majesty met me and thanked me warmly for my services. He engaged me in a conversation that lasted more than an hour, showing the greatest interest in all I had to say. As I had been allowed, or rather desired, to speak with perfect frankness, I was given an opportunity of developing freely and exhaustively all my views on affairs in the Far East and on



the policy that had led up to it, without, of course, touching upon my disagreement with my chief and with Witte, but otherwise entirely in the sense in which I have stated them in these reminiscences. When the audience had come to an end and the Emperor rose to dismiss me, it occurred to me to relate to His Majesty the incident of the two small silver vases which the Empress of Japan had sent to my wife after the war had broken out, and I said that the reason why I ventured to mention this incident was that it had come to my ears that my "well-wishers" had fastened on this insignificant circumstance a whole legend of my having received from the Mikado a complete dinner service in gold of great value, presumably as a reward for having concealed from my Government the impending danger of war. The Emperor laughed heartily and said: "You need not worry on that account. Your wife did exactly right in accepting the Empress's gift. No lady could have acted differently. The story of the gold dinner service has, of course, been related to me, but I treat such insinuations with the contempt they deserve."

Such was the attitude of this all-powerful monarch toward one who, in faithfully trying to serve him and his country to the best of his ability, had antagonized some of his favourite political conceptions. A few months later I had another proof of his generosity and true nobility of character. As will always happen in case of a disastrous war, public opinion was anxious to fasten the blame for its outbreak on some scapegoat, and diplomacy being in a general way rather unpopular, it was natural that the particular diplomat who happened to be in charge of the Legation at Tokio should have been responsible for not having advised the Government in time of the Japanese warlike intentions. One of my friends, then in close contact with the Imperial Family circle, happened to mention incidentally that St. Petersburg society very generally accused me of having failed to keep the Government duly informed of the Japanese preparations for war and to have warned them of the imminent danger of its sudden outbreak.

Whereupon the Emperor with great warmth retorted: "This is quite false; he has always reported the truth, but *what he wrote did not always please.*" These Imperial

words did not fail to be known, and set me right, at least in the eyes of the great world of the capital.

I shall not attempt to give here any account of the events of the war, but I may, perhaps, claim some justification for dwelling at greater length on the causes, which, as I apprehended from the beginning, would determine its disastrous result.

There was, in the first place, the question of the supreme command. By virtue of the law creating the "Viceroyalty of the Far East," the supreme command of all the armed forces, Army as well as Navy, rested with the Viceroy. But the appointment of General Kuropatkin as Commander-in-Chief of the Army created a power which, although nominally subordinated to that of the Viceroy, could not fail to lay claim to and actually to realize a certain degree of independence.

There evidently had been a fundamental disagreement between them as to the whole plan of the campaign. Admiral Alexeeff's idea, as I happened to know, was that our chief aim should be the defence at any cost of Port Arthur, and that therefore we should meet the expected Japanese onslaught at the point where it was most likely to come from; that is to say, at the Yalou River. General Kuropatkin's conception of the wisest conduct of the campaign was commonly believed to have been the very opposite: the abandonment of Port Arthur and its garrison, combined with a skilfully devised plan of gradual fighting retreats so as to draw on the Japanese as far away as possible from their base and as far as possible into Northern Manchuria or even Eastern Siberia, which would bring us nearer our own base, thereby strengthening our position and weakening theirs. Of course I cannot vouch for such having actually been his conception, although appearances certainly indicated that this was the case. If so, it could only have been an effect of the hypnotic influence exercised ever since last century over the minds of our strategists of the Military Academy of St. Petersburg by the traditions of the so-called "patriotic war" of 1812 against the French invasion. Kutusoff's plan of drawing on the hosts of Napoleon and watching their gradual thinning out from their base until they were laid fast in Moscow was based on a very rational estimate

of Napoleon's psychology as well as of that of his own Sovereign Alexander I, whereas Napoleon's estimate of his great rival's psychology was at fault when he felt sure that the loss of Moscow would cause him to conclude peace. Now, it is plain that if Napoleon had a powerful, albeit mistaken, motive in pushing on as far as Moscow, the Japanese could not have any motive whatever for letting themselves be drawn on any farther than they would deem it necessary in order to secure the reconquest of Port Arthur and their hold on Korea. But whether or not this had been General Kuropatkin's original conception, it was certainly acted upon in the conduct of the campaign, with the result that from the very beginning the ultimate loss of Port Arthur was a matter of certainty.

Leaving aside the question of the immense difficulties growing out of the extreme remoteness of the theatre of war from the centre of the Empire and the defective means of communication by a single-track railway with a break around the southern shore of Lake Baikal, there was another circumstance which was bound to affect injuriously the chances of victory, and that was the decision to carry on the war mainly with reserve troops. Middle-aged peasants torn from their families—transported to what must have seemed to them almost the end of the world, to make war in a foreign country against a people of whose very existence they had been ignorant—could hardly be expected to constitute a very willing, let alone enthusiastic and efficient fighting force. I cannot say whether this fatal decision was due to a supercilious underestimation of the enemy's forces and valour, or to the reluctance of our militant nationalists in the War Department, to remove from Western Russia the first-class troops held in readiness for the ever-expected, and by some hoped-for, war with our western neighbours, or perhaps to some secret stipulation of our treaty of alliance with France obliging us to maintain permanently a sufficient fighting force within easy reach of our western frontier. As a matter of fact, it was only towards the end of the war, when peace negotiations had already been initiated, that two first-class army corps were on their way to Manchuria. General Kuropatkin himself seems to have been impressed with the doubtful morale of at least some of the troops under his com-



mand and with the seriousness of the handicap it meant in the conduct of the campaign. At least a distinguished staff officer, who had been a guest of the Commander-in-Chief at dinner, told me that he had heard him break a momentary silence with the following words, pronounced in a reflective and very impressive tone, addressed to no one in particular: "Yes, gentlemen, in these days of popular armies it is impossible to wage war successfully when the people will have none of it."

Besides injecting into our active army an element of doubtful value, the mobilization of the reserves produced among the peasantry widespread discontent, which our revolutionary parties, ever ready to work for the ruin of their country, were not slow to exploit in fomenting serious agrarian troubles. There were no popular elements capable of counteracting their nefarious propaganda.

The "Intelligentsia" was almost unanimously opposed to the war, and remembering the salutary effect our defeat in the Crimean War had had in preparing the way for the liberation of the serfs, were rather expectant, if not openly hopeful, of a new defeat, in the belief that it would lead to liberal reforms in a constitutional sense. Such was also the attitude of the Liberal Press, as far, of course, as compatible with the prudent reserve imposed by a rigorous censorship. The few "jingo" papers, such as the *Novoe Vremia*, were doing their best, with little success, in trying to propagate warlike feeling. In one respect they did a world of harm. That was in supporting a hysterical agitation started by a professor of the Naval Academy, with the object of causing the despatch to the Far East of almost the whole of what was left of the Baltic fleet. In the eyes of anyone acquainted with the condition of that fleet and capable of comprehending the state it would be in after several months of navigation round the Cape of Good Hope, through the Indian Ocean and the China Sea, and the chance it would have, not of victory, but simply of escape if in that state it met the Japanese fleet—this agitation could only be considered as simply criminal, because it meant the certain destruction of the pitiable remnant of our Navy and certain death to thousands of brave men, without even a ghost of a chance of thereby redeeming the fortunes of the campaign. As soon as it became



known that the sending of the fleet to the Far East had been definitely determined upon, rumours began to spread that the Japanese intended to attack the fleet with torpedo boats somewhere before it had even left European waters. The consequence was that agents of the secret police were entrusted with the task of watching the movements of the Japanese phantom torpedo boats. Being furnished with large sums of money for organizing their service of espionage, they naturally had to justify their expenditure of the funds placed at their disposal by reporting to their employers from time to time positive results of their spying activity. In this way, presumably, was created the legend of the presence of mysterious Japanese craft, camouflaged as fishing smacks, hiding in some Norwegian fjords and somewhere on the coast of Great Britain, Japan's ally, with the object of attacking our fleet in the narrow waters of the Great Belt, or the Cattegat and Skager-Rack on entering the North Sea. These fantastic reports naturally spread alarm in our naval circles, and the passing of the fleet through the narrow passage of the Great Belt was surrounded with the most elaborate precautions. The fleet entered the North Sea in perfect safety, and all danger seemed to be past, when, on reaching at night the shoal known as the Dogger Bank, suspicious lights were reported to have shown themselves ahead. In the state of nervous tension under which the personnel of the fleet was labouring, these lights were at once declared to belong to Japanese torpedo boats ; fire was opened on them and continued for some time, until it was realized that it had all been a mistake. It was found afterwards that the supposed Japanese torpedo boats were plain British trawlers of the Hull fishing fleet, that one of them had been sunk, another injured, and that two men had been killed and a few more wounded. This incident created at first a rather serious crisis in the relations between Russia and England, which, however, thanks presumably to the moderating influence of King Edward, found its solution in an agreement to submit the case to an international commission for investigation of the facts with a view to the punishment of any parties who would be found to have been responsible. This Commission, composed of a British, a French, an American and a Russian Admiral, with a fifth elected by them (Admiral Spaun of the Austro-

Hungarian Navy), met at Paris in February of the following year, and by a majority report held Admiral Rozdestvensky, the Commander-in-Chief of the fleet, responsible for the firing, which was not justifiable, as there had not been any torpedo boats among the trawlers nor anywhere near, but at the same time absolved him and his squadron from discredit either to their "military qualities" or their "humanity." This finding was mainly due to the conciliatory attitude of the British member of the Commission.

In the meantime the ill-fated fleet, which had so nearly embroiled us with Great Britain, was pursuing its slow progress and had reached Madagascar when an event occurred which should have furnished an occasion for cancelling the entire expedition, and, indeed, for initiating peace negotiations. I mean the fall of Port Arthur. The defence of the fortress having failed, its reconquest could not, under existing conditions, be made the object of a continuation of this most unpopular war. It would therefore obviously have been wise to begin to think of peace while our fleet still represented a certain potential force not to be considered quite a negligible quantity. Moreover, interior political conditions were certainly not reassuring. Discontent with the prevailing reactionary regime was widespread among the educated classes. The great majority of the "Intelligentzia" had been from the beginning opposed to the war, and seemed hardly to care for the result of it. The remainder was divided between the noisy sham patriotism of those who insisted on our fleet being sent to its doom, and the total absence of patriotism of those who almost openly hoped for defeat, which they seemed to regard as the defeat merely of the "regime" and not at all as the defeat of their own country—a kind of mentality I have not come across anywhere else. The Minister of the Interior, Plehwe, who had apparently counted on a strengthening of the "regime" as a result of a victorious war, had paid for his error with his life. He was literally blown to pieces by a bomb thrown under his carriage by some social revolutionary terrorist. As far as the openly revolutionary parties were concerned, the war naturally was their opportunity. I can do no better than to quote from a neutral and manifestly impartial source some information in this regard. Mr. Arthur Bullard, in his extremely

interesting book, *The Russian Pendulum*, on pages 97 and 98, says :

In the insurrectional period from 1904 to 1907, most of the revolutionary parties in Russia accepted Japanese assistance. Some took it directly, others insisted on a degree of camouflage. Milyoukov's party, the Constitutional Democrats or "Cadets," made the patriotic boast that they did not accept "Japanese gold," but they raised a good deal of money in England, the ally of Japan. The Social Revolutionary Party, with the connivance of the British, organized a filibuster in an English port and loaded a ship with arms to land in Finland. With the direct assistance of the Japanese they carried on an intense propaganda among the Russian soldiers who had become prisoners of war.

Now these revolutionists who accepted Japanese help in 1905 were not partisans of the Mikado. They were just as much opposed to his autocracy as they were to that of the Tsar. They were simply so intent on their own struggle for liberty that they were willing to accept help from anyone. The agents of Imperial Japan had no sympathy with such revolutionary ideas, but—all's fair in love and war—their country was at war with Russia and the more revolution in the Tsar's domain the better.

## CHAPTER XXIV

Grave symptoms of revolutionary unrest—"Bloody Sunday"—Appointment as Ambassador to the U.S.A.—Intervention of Roosevelt—Peace negotiations at Portsmouth—Conclusion of peace with Japan.

BESIDES the fall of Port Arthur the beginning of the year 1905 was signalized by two events which impressed me as ominous premonitions of impending disaster. The first of these events took place on January 6th—the feast of Epiphany—on the occasion of the blessing of the waters, a ceremony which, according to tradition, was always celebrated on the Newa River in front of the Winter Palace. A pavilion was erected on the ice for the accommodation of the Emperor with the Grand Dukes and their suites, as well as for the officiating clergy headed by the Metropolitan Archbishop of St. Petersburg. At the moment of the immersion of the Holy Cross into the water through an aperture provided in the ice a salute was always fired from a battery of field artillery stationed on the opposite shore of the river. On this occasion a battery of the horse artillery of the guard had been assigned to the duty. With one of the first shots of the salute a shower of shrapnel bullets struck the roof of the pavilion, no one inside being hit, but a policeman standing on the quay was wounded, and a number of bullets entered the Nicholas Hall of the Palace where the Court and the Diplomatic Body were assembled to view the ceremony, striking the glass chandeliers and one of the golden plates on the opposite wall. The Emperor displayed his usual splendid nerve and did not show the slightest excitement. The ceremony was concluded without any interruption, and His Majesty, on returning to the palace, held the usual reception of the diplomats and subsequently reviewed the troops on the Palace Square.

In spite of the official statement that the cannon shot, which might easily have had the most fateful consequences,



was the result of carelessness in leaving a shotted cartridge in the breech of a gun after target practice, the public was little inclined to accept the published explanation of this mysterious "accident." Coming on top of the prevailing social unrest, intense labour agitation and widespread strike movement, this singular affair was suspected of having been, if not the result of a conspiracy, in any case a deliberate although clumsily managed attempt on the Emperor's life due to the individual initiative of some revolutionary fanatic. Whatever the true explanation of this occurrence, the very possibility of such a thing happening in one of the crack regiments of the guard disclosed a most alarming state of disorder and laxity of discipline which did not bode any good for the future.

In the meantime the strike situation in the capital had entered an acute stage. At first only industrial demands had been presented, such as for the shortening of the hours of labour and for increase of wages, but instigation by revolutionary agitators led to the formulation of political demands. A petition was drawn up and largely signed, which, going beyond the complaints on which the strike was originally based, attacked the whole "capitalistic" organization of the country, bitterly assailed the "bureaucracy," demanded the summoning of a Constituent Assembly elected by general and secret ballot, asserting that death was preferable to existence under intolerable conditions, and so forth. The petition was one of those grandiloquent products of propaganda literature, quite beyond the mental horizon of its signatories, with which our revolutionists were habitually endeavouring to enlist the sympathies of public opinion abroad in their warfare against the Government of their own country. It was to have been presented personally to the Emperor, who it was hoped would come to the Winter Palace on Sunday, the 9th/22nd, to be present at an immense demonstration of the working classes. It was planned that the workmen of St. Petersburg, some hundred thousand of them, headed by their leader, the priest Gapon (a contemptible personage who had begun his career in the employ of the secret police, had then joined the Revolutionary Socialists, had afterwards re-entered the service of the police, and ended by being hanged by the revolutionists as a traitor to their

cause) should march to the Winter Palace for the purpose of seeing the Emperor and laying before him the needs of the people. The Government was aware of the intended demonstration and had taken military precautions to meet the emergency. The result was that when an immense, although unarmed, crowd appeared on the Palace Square, and in spite of warnings to stop, continued pressing forward, the officer in command of the small body of troops who was under orders not to let the crowd approach the palace, opened fire with necessarily fatal effect. Several similar occurrences took place in other parts of the town. The number of victims, as given by the foreign Press, amounted to thousands, the streets were said to have been running with blood, the day it happened was called “ Bloody Sunday,” and so on. In reality the number of killed did not exceed seventy odd, nor that of the wounded 240. I quote these figures from the account of this affair as given in the *Eclipse of Russia*, by Dr. E. J. Dillon, certainly no friend of the Russian Government. It might, of course, be said that an unarmed crowd, however large, could easily have been handled and subdued by, say, five or six hundred New York policemen armed with nothing but nightsticks. But then there were in St. Petersburg no New York policemen experienced in the use of unquestioned authority and conscious of being backed by the majesty of the law of a free people. It cannot be gainsaid, on the other hand, that the Government was justified in taking such measures of precaution as they felt confident they could rely on, in order to prevent a riot from being turned into a revolution.

It would carry me too far were I to attempt to give a detailed account of all the happenings and cross currents of political opinion which I had occasion to observe in those troubled days, and I shall therefore take up again the thread of my narrative regarding my diplomatic experiences, the more so as domestic politics were outside my province, and interested me at the time mainly in as much as they affected our position in international politics.

A couple of days after that fateful Sunday, I was honoured, from a source the authority of which could not be questioned, with the first and only intimation I ever had that my appointment as Ambassador to the United States was contemplated

in the event of Count Cassini's removal from Washington to another post, which, as a matter of fact, took place four months later. This naturally set my thoughts in the direction of what I had reason to believe would be my field of activity in the near future, and likely enough in connection with future peace negotiations, the beginning of which could evidently not be much longer delayed. It so happened that the post of Councillor to the British Embassy at St. Petersburg was occupied by a young and very able diplomat, Mr. (later Sir) Cecil Spring Rice, whom I had known some twenty years before at Washington as Second Secretary to the British Legation. I had been dining with him and his charming young wife, when some days later I learned that he had just left for Washington at the invitation of President Roosevelt for a brief visit at the White House, and that he was to return by the same steamer, that would land him in New York. This most unexpected news set me thinking and trying to find a plausible reply to the question : What could have prompted the President to invite in the middle of winter a guest from the other side of the world to spend a few days with him at the White House ? I knew, of course, that President Roosevelt in his younger days as Civil Service Commissioner had been on very friendly terms with the young and popular Secretary of the British Legation. I had the very highest opinion of Mr. Spring Rice's character and exceptional ability, and I knew that not one of the foreign diplomats at St. Petersburg could compare with him in knowledge and understanding of political and social conditions in Russia. This led me to ask myself whether the President might not have wished to satisfy himself as to these conditions by inquiry from a source which he rightly considered to be the most reliable, and what, if such were the case, could be the reason of his anxiety to secure the desired information as quickly as possible at the cost of putting his guest to the inconvenience of two crossings of the ocean in midwinter. Putting two and two together, I came to the conclusion that President Roosevelt was perhaps revolving in his mind the question whether a friendly mediation might not be resorted to, and that, before attempting any step in that direction, he wished to ascertain whether such an initiative on his part would be likely to meet with success.

I never learned whether my surmise as to the object of



of Mr. Spring Rice's visit to the White House was correct, as I refrained naturally from questioning him about it on his return to St. Petersburg, but I felt certain that whatever information he might have imparted to the President must have fitted the case, as he was entirely competent to view the condition of things in Russia in its true light and to draw therefrom the obvious conclusions.

The negotiations with the Spanish Court concerning the transfer of Count Cassini from Washington to Madrid had taken considerable time, and it was not till about the end of May that my appointment as Ambassador to the United States became an accomplished fact. We did not tarry at St. Petersburg, and hurried on to Paris to prepare as quickly as possible for our installation at the Washington Embassy. It was there that I first learned of President Roosevelt's offer of mediation and its acceptance by our Government, and also of the proposed appointment of Mr. Nelidoff, our Ambassador at Paris, as First Plenipotentiary at the forthcoming Conference for the conclusion of peace with Japan. I had no doubt that Count Lamsdorff would have preferred to have his friend Witte entrusted with this all-important mission, whose success he certainly most ardently wished to assure. But in the presence of the Emperor's hardly concealed dislike and distrust of Witte, it was natural that His Majesty's choice should have fallen on Mr. Nelidoff, the oldest and highest in rank of all our Ambassadors, a man of the highest personal character and vast diplomatic experience. He felt, however, compelled, after some hesitation, to decline the appointment on account of the state of his health. The matter was still in suspense when we left for New York, and it was at sea that a wireless message reached me conveying the news that Mr. Muravieff, our Ambassador at Rome, and myself, had been appointed jointly First and Second Plenipotentiaries for the peace negotiations. It turned out, however, some days later that Mr. Muravieff also had declined to undertake a mission at once difficult and unpopular, and Witte was definitely appointed to take his place as First Plenipotentiary. His appointment was very well received here as well as in Japan. It was generally looked upon as favouring the chances of a speedy peace. It was also a triumph for Count Lamsdorff, who had succeeded at last in



securing the Emperor's consent to the appointment of the man he held to be best able of carrying to a successful issue the prospective peace negotiations. I was told later that Witte's appointment had given great satisfaction likewise to those "well-wishers" of both of us who had been rubbing their hands in gleeful expectation of coming serious disagreements between us on account of his well-known hostility toward me. If such indeed were their expectations, they were doomed to disappointment, as will be seen later on.

We reached New York on July 4th, and left immediately for Manchester, Massachusetts, where, thanks to the kindness of Mr. George von L. Meyer, the American Ambassador at St. Petersburg, I had been able to rent a cottage by the seaside. Having seen my family settled there, I went to Washington to take over the Embassy from Count Cassini, who had deferred his departure until my arrival. When I reached Washington I found the State Department in charge of Mr. Peirce, Third Assistant Secretary of State, the successor to the recently deceased Secretary of State, Mr. John Hay, not yet having been appointed. He informed me that Portsmouth, New Hampshire, had been chosen as the place where the Peace Conference was to meet. I duly cabled this information to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and having also mentioned that I was transferring the Embassy for the summer months to Magnolia (that being the designation of the part of the township of Manchester where our cottage was situated), I received a reply intimating that it was desirable that the Embassy should be established at or near the place where the Conference was to be held. One of the Department wiseacres apparently had concluded from the exotic sound of the name "Magnolia" that the place I had chosen for the summer home of the Embassy must needs be somewhere in Florida or elsewhere in the tropics, at a safe distance from any bother about peace conferences. So this necessitated another cable to clear up the misunderstanding.

Through the intermediary of Mr. Peirce it was arranged that the President should receive me on July 13th at Oyster Bay. On the morning of that day Mr. Peirce came to fetch me and took me to the New York Yacht Club landing, where we boarded the President's yacht, the *Sylph*. At Oyster Bay

we found the President's carriage waiting to take us to Sagamore Hill. Mr. Peirce presented me to the President, who received me with his characteristic frank and winning cordiality. After a few minutes' talk on general subjects, the President presented me to Mrs. Roosevelt in her drawing-room, where three or four other guests were assembled, and led the way to the dining-room.

We sat down to a quiet family meal—one or two of the children being present—served in the best taste, graced by the hostess's refined charm of manner and enlivened by the President's brilliant and absorbingly interesting conversation. Altogether, it was an occasion devoid of all formality, but marked by the supreme distinction of perfect simplicity allied to the most open-hearted friendliness. On our return to the *Sylph* we met a few reporters, one of whom asked me whether I had noticed that "little Archie" had been watching our landing, sitting on the pier with a camouflaging fishing rod, his bare legs dangling in the water. Captain Archibald will, I hope, pardon my mentioning this little incident of his boyhood days, as he will readily understand that everything connected with my first meeting with the greatest American of our generation was bound to impress itself for ever on my memory.

A few days later I requested the favour of another interview with the President in consequence of a pressing "agony" cable I had received from our Minister of Foreign Affairs. Count Lamsdorff complained bitterly that the Japanese, in spite of our consent to enter upon peace negotiations, had invaded the Island of Sakhalin, and directed me to request the President's intercession with the Japanese, in order to cause them to discontinue their advance on the unjustifiably invaded territory. This instruction it was my painful duty to obey, although it was perfectly plain that Count Lamsdorff had only himself to blame for neglecting to stipulate as a condition of our consent to begin peace negotiations that active hostilities should be arrested. I felt that I was being sent to the President on a fool's errand. President Roosevelt, very generously, relieved me of my embarrassment by telling me that he had already, on his own initiative, broached this subject to the Japanese, but that they thought that, in consenting to peace negotiations,

they had not undertaken to discontinue military operations, and that it was obviously to their advantage, which they saw no reason for renouncing, to secure as much as possible of the enemy's territory before the actual beginning of negotiations. To such perfectly logical reasoning no exception could of course be taken, except on ethical grounds, a strict observance of which rarely commends itself to statecraft as practised in this callous world.

On that occasion the President approached a subject which evidently preoccupied his mind most earnestly—the success of the coming Peace Conference. He endeavoured to convince me of the necessity for Russia to make the necessary sacrifices in order to secure the speedy conclusion of peace, which alone could forestall the imminent danger of the loss of Vladivostok and the province of the littoral and maybe even of the whole of Eastern Siberia as far as Lake Baikal. I was, of course, not in a position to say anything whatever in regard to the conditions upon which we would be prepared to conclude peace with Japan, not being acquainted as yet even with the outlines of our instructions which Witte was to bring with him. But I ventured to controvert the view the President seemed to entertain as to the precarious character of our position and the consequent necessity for us to conclude peace at any sacrifice. I said that, as far as I could see, we were quite willing to terminate a war that could not lead to any decisive result, but that this was by no means a matter of imperious necessity for us; that in a military sense I could not consider our position at all a hopeless one for the following reasons: first, that two army corps composed of some of our best troops drawn from the western frontier were then on their way to the Far East, a serious increase of our fighting force which the Japanese would hardly be able to match; secondly, that since the Battle of Mukden, the Japanese had not undertaken any serious advance, which, given the great ability and enterprise of their high command, could only mean that they did not dispose of forces sufficient for such an undertaking to be risked with any expectation of success; thirdly, that this surmise seemed to be fully confirmed by the fact that the Japanese had invaded Sakhalin Island only after our consent to begin negotiations for peace had been secured,



which plainly indicated that until then they had been unable to spare even the very small number of troops needed for occupying that quite defenceless island. All this, I said, appeared to me sufficient to prove that we were not by any means exposed to the danger of losing Vladivostok, let alone the whole province of the littoral, and that there was in the whole situation, military as well as political, nothing that could compel us to purchase peace at any price.

If I remember rightly, it was on this occasion that I was introduced to Mr. Riddle, then Minister to Roumania and later on Ambassador to Russia, who was one of the guests at luncheon. Although seated at the other end of the table and engaged in a lively conversation with Mrs. Roosevelt, I could not help overhearing some of the remarks passing between the President and Mr. Riddle. I recollect how much I was struck by the President's evident familiarity with such an exotic subject as Roumanian literature. But then I was not, at that time, aware of the astounding universality of Colonel Roosevelt's interest in and knowledge of not only politics and literature, but of everything else in the world that was worthy of arresting his attention. After luncheon, when we were having our coffee and cigars on the lawn, Mr. Robert Bacon, who had just landed from his houseboat, joined our party, and the conversation soon turned to American domestic politics in connection with some question in which public opinion was much interested. I ventured to make some remark on the subject under discussion which caused the President to inquire how in the world I managed to know as much about it. I said that the explanation was simply that, having always been greatly interested in American affairs, I had for the last twenty-eight years been regularly taking in two of the leading American newspapers, and when he asked me what particular papers they were and I had told him, he laughed heartily and said: "Hello, the very ones that are always down on me."

It was, I believe, on the same day that Mr. Bacon was offered and accepted the post of First Assistant Secretary of State. In this capacity he was brought into close contact with the diplomatic body, with whom he became extremely popular. His unfailing tact, genial disposition and kindly friendliness endeared him, I make bold to say, to all of us,



and it was with sincere grief that I recently paid homage to the mortal remains of this distinguished statesman whose untimely loss the nation has every reason to mourn.

After my second visit to Oyster Bay I rejoined my family in Mr. Thomas Jefferson Coolidge's very comfortable cottage near Magnolia beach. The house was large enough to put up our dear friend Prince Koudacheff, who had accompanied us from Russia as a voluntary attaché to the Embassy, as well as the Chancellerie, with all its paraphernalia. Manchester being within easy motoring distance from Portsmouth, I intended to take up temporary quarters at Newcastle, New Hampshire, where the Government had reserved accommodation for the Russian and Japanese delegations. I would remark here incidentally that, though the peace became officially known the "Peace of Portsmouth," that town had in reality nothing to do with the Peace Conference, except that as the inhabitants could see us twice a day motoring through its streets on our way between Newcastle, where we were living, and Kittery Island, Maine, where the sittings of the Conference took place.

Having received information to the effect that Witte and his party were due to arrive on August 2nd, I left for New York to make arrangements for his arrival and to meet him on landing. The steamer arrived on time, and when she had been made fast at Hoboken I went on board to welcome my future colleague at the Peace Conference. Witte introduced to me the members of his party, and among them Mr. Shipoff, Director of the Treasury Department, whose presence, as well as that of a representative of the Chinese Eastern Railway, may have lent colour to the expectations of those who believed that some kind of a financial transaction in the shape of a camouflaged indemnity payment was contemplated. Witte's reception on the densely crowded pier was quite enthusiastic and demonstrative, even Americans joining in the noisy welcome given him by his countrymen, and by numerous sympathetic Slavs of the Slavonic Alliance.

Obliging policemen piloted us safely through the crowd to my automobile and we drove to the St. Regis Hotel, where I had secured rooms for him and his party. We went up at once to his rooms, denied ourselves to all callers and proceeded to study our instructions and to consider our plan

of action at the coming Conference. Our full power was in our joint names, neither of us having the right to sign a treaty without the other's concurrence. It was necessary, therefore, to establish between us a complete agreement on all points detailed in our instructions. The rest being easily disposed of, two of these points demanded most serious attention. They concerned the Island of Sakhalin and the question of the payment of a war indemnity. On both these points the Emperor's instructions were explicit and categorical. We were not to consent to the cession of even the smallest particle of Russian territory, nor to the payment of a war indemnity in any shape or form. As regards the first of these points we had no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that in the presence of irremediable facts and conditions this point could not be successfully carried in its entirety, and that we should be empowered to consent in this regard to such concessions as circumstances might render necessary. We had, indeed, to take into consideration the fact that the Japanese had already invaded Sakhalin, that our small garrison, largely outnumbered, had surrendered, and that in case of a continuation of the war, we should unquestionably be deprived of the possibility of reconquering the lost territory on the island, the Japanese having by the destruction of our fleet secured the absolute command of the sea. The question, therefore, reduced itself to this: whether it would be justifiable to render the conclusion of peace dependent on our adhering uncompromisingly to this point of our instructions, a question we both agreed could only be answered in the negative. Having settled this point, it remained to embody our deliberate opinion, expressed in terms as convincing as we could muster, in a cable to Count Lamsdorff for submission to the Emperor. This we proceeded to do then and there. The next question concerned the war indemnity, on the payment of which the Japanese would probably insist. In some interviews given to the Press, Witte had stated that a payment by Russia of a war indemnity was entirely out of the question, an assertion which, however, seemed to be to some extent invalidated by the presence as experts of treasury and railway officials. His profound conviction of the imperative necessity for Russia of concluding peace with the least possible delay was, indeed, so firmly

established in his mind that in case of extremity he would not have hesitated to consent to the payment of a war indemnity provided it could be accomplished under some plausible disguise. I endeavoured to allay his apprehensions that a refusal on our part to pay an indemnity might bring about the rupture of the negotiations and consequently the failure to secure the peace which Russia so sorely needed. In arguing this point I expressed my firm conviction that the Japanese were even more anxious than we could be for a speedy conclusion of peace—a conviction based, besides other considerations of a military as well as financial nature, on my suspicion that it was the Japanese Government who had solicited President Roosevelt's mediation. I was not, of course, in a position to produce any documentary proofs of such having been the case, but I felt morally certain that my suspicion was founded on a fact which both sides were obviously bound to conceal. Whether I had succeeded in convincing him, or whether he appreciated my determination not to yield the point, I am unable to say. However, after several hours of most earnest and unreservedly frank and friendly discussion, we reached a complete agreement on all points, to which we both remained faithful to the end, and which enabled us to conduct the negotiations as if we had been one man with one mind, one will, and one heart beating for our country, whose ruin and destruction we both felt coming and which he was to be mercifully spared from witnessing.

In the meantime arrangements had been completed for the first meeting of the Plenipotentiaries, which was to take place on the following day at Oyster Bay, under the auspices of the President himself, on board his yacht *Mayflower*. Promptly at 10 a.m. on August 5th, Witte and I, accompanied by the members of our delegation, arrived at the New York Yacht Club landing, where we were received by Mr. Peirce as representative of the State Department. On the pier opposite a great crowd greeted our appearance with rousing cheers, and I must say in this connection that wherever Witte appeared in public he was always treated with marked respect and manifest friendliness by the people. A little before noon we reached Oyster Bay, where the Japanese delegation had arrived an hour earlier. Here I must explain



how the State Department had successfully resolved the knotty question of precedence between the two delegations. The Japanese having arrived in New York about a week before Witte and his suite, were therefore the first to be received by the President, but from the moment of our meeting the precedence was to pass to us for the following reason: although both delegations were headed by Ministers of State, Baron Komura being Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and Witte President of the Committee of Ministers in Russia, I was the ranking personage of both delegations, according to international usage, as Ambassador and therefore representative of the person of my Sovereign.

On arrival at Oyster Bay we were taken to the *Mayflower*, where we were most cordially received by the President, and Witte presented the members of his suite. Then the Japanese delegation filed into the cabin, the President formally introduced the Plenipotentiaries to each other and led the way to the diningsaloon, where a stand-up luncheon was prepared so as to prevent any embarrassment about precedence and seats at table. The President drew us Plenipotentiaries aside in a corner, chatting with us quite informally while we were seated all in a group surrounding our genial host and were being served with eatables and—I blush to say—the traditional drinkables. After a while the President rose and said:

“Gentlemen, I propose a toast to which there will be no answer and which I ask you to drink in silence, standing. I drink to the welfare and prosperity of the Sovereigns and peoples of the two great nations whose representatives have met one another on this ship. It is my most earnest hope and prayer, in the interest not only of these two great Powers, but of all civilized mankind, that a just and lasting peace may speedily be concluded between them.”

The President, having presided with admirable tact over the delicate ceremony of the first meeting of the Plenipotentiaries of the countries at war, who responded to it by a scrupulously courteous attitude toward each other, was the first to leave the *Mayflower*, followed by the Japanese delegation. We remained on board, as the *Mayflower* was to take us to Portsmouth.

We reached Portsmouth about 9 a.m. on August 8th,



and shortly afterwards the Commandant of the Kittery Navy Yard, Admiral Mead, came on board to welcome us. From the *Mayflower* the Admiral went to pay a similar visit of welcome to the Japanese delegation on board the *Dolphin*, after which he returned to the Navy Yard to be in readiness to receive us. According to the established order of precedence we were the first to be taken ashore and to be received by Admiral Mead and the officers of his staff. A few minutes later we were followed by the Japanese delegation, and then we all proceeded to the building set apart for the use of the Conference. The accommodation provided for us was spacious, extremely comfortable and convenient for the transaction of business; in a word, perfect in every respect. After being shown all the arrangements, we were driven in carriages over the bridge connecting Kittery Island with the mainland of the State of New Hampshire. At the New Hampshire end of the bridge a regiment of the New Hampshire National Guard met and escorted us through the streets of the quaint old town to the court-house, where a large crowd was assembled and greeted us with enthusiastic cheers. Governor McLane received us in the court-house and bade us a cordial welcome in the name of the State of New Hampshire, after which ceremony we were driven to the Wentworth Hotel at Newcastle. There we found everything prepared for our reception and settled down in this very large and beautifully situated seaside hotel, which was to be our home for the next four weeks. Each delegation was lodged in one of the wings of the building and had the exclusive use of a private dining-room, so that we had all the seclusion that it was possible to provide for us in such a large hostelry, which was crowded with people attracted, perhaps, by the chance of watching the daily doings of such a number of foreign diplomats engaged in a work of historic importance. This it was, of course, that had attracted to the Wentworth a large number of newspaper men—I was told that they numbered about one hundred and twenty—not only from all parts of the country, but also from Europe. Among them were such shining lights as Sir Donald McKenzie Wallace of the *Times*, Mr. Hedeman of the *Matin*, Signor Cortesi of the *Corriere della Sera*, and the ablest of them all, Dr. E. J. Dillon, who had accompanied his friend Witte

all the way from Russia and rendered him most valuable services in keeping him in touch with the American Press. All the gentlemen of the Press without exception behaved with the utmost discretion, confining themselves to watching things from afar without ever seeking interviews, and at the same time displaying in their daily letters or telegrams an extraordinary ingenuity in informing their papers of the daily progress of the negotiations, which, of course, were being carried on behind the veil of the strictest secrecy. In this connection I remember an amusing incident that took place a few days before the conclusion of peace. I had returned late in the afternoon from a rather prolonged sitting of the Conference, and was resting on the veranda of the hotel, enjoying a cigar and a mug of beer, when a young gentleman approached me, bowing from afar, introduced himself as a reporter and said :

“Excuse my intruding, I have come to make a declaration.”

“Delighted to hear it,” said I; “I am listening.”

“I have come to say this,” continued he, “we are here a great number of newspaper men, and when we came here 90 per cent. of us were pro-Japanese and anti-Russian, but now the proportion is reversed. That is all I have to say.”

I replied smilingly :

“This is indeed very gratifying intelligence, but permit me to ask whether this complete change is due to the fact that you have found out that, after all, we are white.”

“Well,” said he, “that’s about the long and the short of it.”

Mrs. Peirce, the charming wife of the Assistant Secretary of State, who had charge of all arrangements for the convenience of the Conference and the comfort of its members, entertained us most hospitably in a cottage they had taken for the occasion and so did some of the old residents of the neighbourhood. I remember dining with Witte at a house in the village of Newcastle which was said to have been built by the first Governor of New Hampshire. Three things about this house impressed themselves on my memory : the fact that, although built entirely of wood, it had during three centuries escaped the danger of fire ; the surprisingly large size of the armour in one of the rooms, which was said to have belonged to the original owner ; and the proportionately

Lilliputian dimensions of the low-ceilinged rooms with doorways seemingly meant for comparative dwarfs rather than for such a giant as the original owner of the house must have been.

The Government had placed at our joint disposal an automobile in which Witte and I used to drive together every day to the meetings of the Conference on Kittery Island and back again through the streets of Portsmouth and Newcastle. Our "well-wishers" at St. Petersburg who had been figuring on irremediable dissensions between us would have been much put out to see us always in the friendliest attitude, driving, walking or sitting together on the veranda of the hotel engaged in earnest and animated conversation. The intimate relationship between us, brought about by collaboration in our momentous task and the consequent opportunity for a constant interchange of views, was a matter of unmixed satisfaction to me, the more so as on most important subjects we were entirely of one mind. There was only one point on which we were not quite agreed, but which, of course, we discussed only in a purely "academic" way, as it concerned a question that had already been settled by a higher power in a sense to which our very presence at Portsmouth bore witness—I mean the question of the timeliness of the conclusion of peace. We were both agreed that unless the course of the Government's domestic policy were radically altered—the half-hearted measure of reform devised by the new Minister of the Interior, Mr. Boulyguine, in the shape of a merely consultative Duma elected on a basis of very limited suffrage having come much too late and having completely failed to satisfy the educated classes—a revolution was bound to come. Where we disagreed was in this: I thought that the conclusion of peace after a series of defeats without our Army being given a chance to redeem the glory of our arms by a victory which the reinforcements already on the way might have placed within its grasp would hasten the outbreak of the revolution; whereas Witte felt sure that the conclusion of peace as speedily as possible would, by removing one of the principal causes of popular discontent, be helpful in staving off the danger of revolution at least for some time. I remember how on one occasion when we were discussing this subject I pointed to the example of



France in 1871, and reminded him of what I believed to be a fact, namely, that in France, for one statue erected to the memory of the country's greatest statesman, Thiers, the "liberator of the territory," there would be found ten in honour of Gambetta, whom many had called "le fou furieux," but who, by leading a forlorn hope, had won in the hearts of his countrymen an imperishable memory as the man who would never despair of his country. To this Witte retorted that existing conditions in both cases admitted of no comparison, and that therefore if we had possessed a Gambetta he would have failed to secure a following.

I shall not attempt to outline the course of our negotiations beyond stating that they were carried on by both sides with scrupulous courtesy and in a spirit of fairness and conciliation. The plan adopted was to deal at first with contentious matters of minor importance. After having disposed of them to mutual satisfaction, we were about to approach the discussion of two principal points which threatened to become the rock upon which our efforts to reach an agreement might be stranded—the question of Sakhalin and the payment of a war indemnity. It was in the middle of the night, at 2 a.m. on August 19th, that Mr. Peirce woke me up to read to me the text of a cipher telegram he had received from Oyster Bay in which the President directed him to request me to come to see him without delay, adding that if I took the 7 a.m. train for Boston and New York I should find the *Sylph* waiting for me at Bridgeport to take me to Oyster Bay, where I should arrive some time in the afternoon. Mr. Peirce warned me also that the fact of my going to see the President was to be kept secret as far as possible. Following the indications received, I left Portsmouth by the first train in the morning, accompanied by Prince Koudacheff, carrying my cipher code. On board the train I recognized a fellow-lodger at the Wentworth whom I knew to be not unconnected with the Press. He confined himself, however, to watching us from a distance. His colleagues who surrounded me at Boston as I was about to board the New York express displayed a greater degree of inquisitiveness; they wanted to know where I was going and why I wanted to go anywhere, anyhow. I was obliged to tell them one of those near truths



with which Ministers in Parliaments are wont to parry unwelcome inquiries. On reaching Bridgeport we managed, however, to slip off the train unobserved, boarded the *Sylph* and reached Oyster Bay at about four o'clock. After a couple of hours of a most interesting conference with the President, the substance of which it is not my province to disclose here, I returned on board the *Sylph* and had a short message to Witte put in cipher which Captain Evans sent ashore, instructing the messenger and the boat's crew to say, in reply to any inquiries, that the *Sylph* was going direct to Newport. Having taken these elaborate precautions in the hope of eluding the vigilance of the Press, the captain altered our course as soon as we found ourselves out of sight in the middle of the Sound and we made straight for Bridgeport, where we landed at about 2 a.m. Having about half an hour to wait for the night train from New York, we went to the station restaurant for some hot coffee. Suddenly an alert-looking gentleman bobbed up by my side, serenely seated himself on the nearest high stool, and "wanted to know all about it." I had recourse to the same argument which had frequently stood me in good stead when I had to avoid answering similar questions without wounding the feelings of the inquirer. I told him that, as an Ambassador, I considered myself as to some extent engaged in the same reporting business, and that therefore he could hardly expect that if I possessed some exclusive information or had succeeded in securing a "scoop," I would be ready to share it with a business rival. He seemed satisfied with the evasive reply, and said he would simply report that he had seen me, that I looked cheerful and seemed to be in a jocose frame of mind, from which he concluded that I had had a satisfactory interview with the President. To this, of course, I could not demur.

It stands to reason that the President, as mediator, did not limit his conciliatory efforts to one side only and that he had been all the time in touch with the other side as well. Further information on this subject will be found in an article by Mr. Melville E. Stone, published by the *Saturday Evening Post* on January 30, 1915.

On August 29th a complete agreement was reached between the Plenipotentiaries on the basis of the retention

by Russia of the northern part of the Island of Sakhalin which had not been occupied by the Japanese and the withdrawal by Japan of the claim for a war indemnity.

The following telegrams were exchanged with the President on the same day :

PORTSMOUTH, N.H., *August 29th.*

THE PRESIDENT :

We have the honour to inform you that we have reached an agreement with the Plenipotentiaries of Japan. To you history will award the glory of having taken the generous initiative of bringing about this Conference whose labours will now result in establishing a peace honourable to both sides.

(Signed) WITTE.  
ROSEN.

OYSTER BAY, LONG ISLAND, *August 29th.*

MESSRS. WITTE AND ROSEN :

I cannot too strongly express my congratulations to you and to the entire civilized world upon the agreement reached between you and the Plenipotentiaries of Japan and upon the fact that thereby a peace has been secured, just and honourable to both sides.

(Signed) THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

We had next to draft the final text of the treaty in proper form in French and English, to have the instruments in duplicate prepared for signature, etc. All this took time, and it was only on September 5th that everything was ready for the final act, which took place in the Conference Room at the Navy Yard in the presence of the Governor of the State, the Mayor of Portsmouth, and other notabilities. The arrival of the respective Plenipotentiaries and their suites was greeted with ambassadorial salutes of nineteen guns, the guard of honour presenting arms. After the signatures of the Plenipotentiaries had been affixed in silence, they shook hands across the table, as did their associates. The description of what followed I quote from the columns of a New York newspaper of the period :

Baron Rosen was the first to break the silence. Rising from his seat, the Ambassador, looking Baron Komura and M. Takahira straight in the eye, said :

" We have just signed an act which will have forever a place in the annals of history. It is not for us, active participants in the conclusion of this treaty, to pass judgment on its import and significance.

"As negotiators on behalf of the Empire of Russia, as well as of the Empire of Japan, we may with tranquil conscience say that we have done all that was in our power in order to bring about the peace for which the whole civilized world was longing.

"As Plenipotentiaries of Russia we fulfil a most agreeable duty in acknowledging that in negotiating with our hitherto adversaries, and from this hour our friends, we have been dealing with true and thorough gentlemen, to whom we are happy to express our high esteem and personal regard.

"We earnestly hope that friendly relations between the two Empires will henceforth be firmly established, and we trust that His Excellency Baron Komura, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and one of the leading statesmen of his country, will apply to the strengthening of these relations the wide experience and wise statesmanship he so conspicuously displayed during these negotiations, which have now been so auspiciously concluded."

Baron Komura replied that he shared entirely the views of Baron Rosen. The treaty of peace which they had just signed was in the interest of humanity and civilization, and he was happy to believe that it would bring about a firm, lasting peace between two neighbouring Empires. He added that it would always be pleasant for him to recall that throughout the long and serious negotiations which they have now left behind them he and his colleagues had invariably received from the Russian Plenipotentiaries the highest courtesy and consideration, and finally he begged to assure their Excellencies, the Russian Plenipotentiaries, that it would be his duty, as well as his pleasure, to do everything in his power to make the treaty in fact what it professes to be in words—a treaty of peace and amity.

At the conclusion of Baron Komura's remarks, M. Witte arose and said he desired to see Baron Rosen and the Japanese Plenipotentiaries alone for a few minutes. The four retired to the Russian office and were closeted for ten minutes. What took place in that final conference of the peace-makers the world may never know. The Plenipotentiaries have refused to discuss it even with their secretaries.

While the conference was in progress the secretaries were affixing the official seal to the treaty, there being four seals to each of the four copies. Upon their return to the conference, the Plenipotentiaries signed the protocol of their last meeting, which records the signing of the treaty, September 5, 1905, at 3.50 p.m. in the Portsmouth Navy Yard.

We left the Navy Yard shortly before five o'clock and drove through the festively beflagged streets of Portsmouth, filled with enthusiastically cheering crowds, to Christ Episcopal Church, where the Rector, Father Brine, with the priests of the Russian Orthodox Church, had arranged a joint service of thanksgiving.



Every seat in the body of the church was filled some time before the service began, shortly after five o'clock, and fully two thousand persons stood outside of the building. The entire Russian suite, numbering nineteen persons, attended. The last to arrive were M. Witte and Baron Rosen. The two envoys were escorted to seats reserved for them just within the chancel rail.

The clergy present included the Right Rev. Henry Codman Potter, Episcopal Bishop of New York; seven Russian priests from various cities of the United States, and four of the Episcopal body.

The service began with a solemn procession about the church. Headed by the cross-bearer and acolytes carrying lighted tapers, a Russian and American choir of sixty voices passed up the centre aisle of the sacred edifice. After the priests, acolytes, attendants and choristers had been seated in the sanctuary, the service proper was begun by Father Brine, who intoned the Prayer Book passages and prayers throughout, the choir singing the responses. At the singing of the *Magnificat* the altar was censed.

A brief sermon in English was preached by Rev. Alexander A. Hotovitsky, arch-priest of St. Nicholas's Russian Orthodox Church, New York City. Father Hotovitsky, in his discourse, emphasized the blessings of peace. His prayer, he said, was that all the people of Russia and Japan might be of one mind regarding the dangers of war or strife.

Following the sermon the Russian priests and attendants took positions before the high altar and chanted a *Te Deum* in Russian. M. Witte and Baron Rosen left their seats and stood in the chancel facing the altar, and were surrounded by the Russian priests during the singing of the solemn chant. The ceremony was the most solemn and impressive of the service. While the hymn of thanksgiving was being sung the smoke from censers obscured at times the light from half a hundred candles.

Father Hotovitsky offered prayers for the Army, and then a prayer for all those who lost their lives in the war was chanted. The service ended at 6.55 p.m.

Thus was ended one of the greatest wars of history by the conclusion of a peace of justice and of conciliation establishing solid foundations for future friendly relations between two great nations, whose rulers, aided by the wise and generous mediation of America's great President, in deciding to put a stop to further bloodshed and strife, were guided solely by the dictates of reason and of statesmanship.



## CHAPTER XXV

Colonel Harvey—Count Witte—The rights of Sovereigns—Mr. Meyer—  
Russian characteristics—The agrarian question—Military service.

ON the day following the signing of the Treaty of Peace, henceforth to be known as the Treaty of Portsmouth, we left for New York in Mr. J. P. Morgan's special train which he had very kindly placed at Witte's disposal. We had, before leaving the Wentworth Hotel, received from Colonel George Harvey an invitation to a banquet at the Metropolitan Club in New York, to which he had invited all the men most distinguished and prominent in the field of statecraft, diplomacy, finance and letters who happened to be in town. The banquet took place on September 7th, and it was an occasion never to be forgotten by those of us who are still among the living, and who were privileged to listen to the words of truly warm-hearted greeting extended to us.

I find in the newspapers of the period the complete text of the address delivered by Colonel Harvey in proposing the toast to the Emperor of Russia. The meaning of his eloquent and remarkable speech, which seemed to reflect the disposition of all those present, engraved itself deeply in our hearts, and in recalling the memory of those stirring and happy days I cannot help reproducing here the exact words of an address which impressed me so profoundly and so completely responded to the feelings I cherished all my life long.

Colonel Harvey said :

The memory of man is proverbially short. Prosperity and contentment induce oblivion in the human mind. Lest we forget : We too, in common with the great nation whose distinguished representatives have honoured us with their presence this evening, have had our wars. When first we demanded our freedom we were not only comparatively helpless, but we seemed to be absolutely friendless. The mother-country, as she was then and is now in a modified degree, acting in consonance with the custom of the period, could see no

reason for spilling the blood of her own sons while mercenaries could be had for hire. Instinctively her eyes turned to the populated East, to friendly Russia, which had at that time, in the language of her own Prime Minister, a sufficient number of troops under arms and to spare to trample the rebellious American colonists under their feet. Never was a requisition made by a King with a feeling of greater certainty of fulfilment than that of George III upon the splendid Monarchy of Eastern Europe, and never was there experienced more angry disappointment than that of the confident ruler when he received from the great Queen Catharine the cold response that it ill became two powerful nations to join forces to quell a justifiable revolution unsupported by a foreign Power. Upon that rock of fairness, justice and humanity the great Queen planted the Imperial banner, and there it has remained in friendship, sympathy and helpfulness through all the trials that have come upon our beloved country to this very day.

Again, lest we forget: Whether or not the United States of America, acting through her universally supported Chief Magistrate, has conferred a benefit on Russia in facilitating peace at this time, her effort was based upon a precedent which not only justified its making but should and does stand forth in our recollection as a vivid illustration of the continuance of the kindly feeling manifested in our war of independence. When in 1813 the young Republic was again harassed and all but overwhelmed in her second great struggle for the preservation of life and freedom, there was in the whole world but one monarch willing to hold forth a helping hand, but one ruler ready to hazard the fortunes of his own Empire upon a proposal of voluntary intervention. It was the Czar of Russia who, with equal courage and determination, blazed the way for Theodore Roosevelt.

Once more, and finally, lest we forget: Within the living memory of many around this board, when the Republic, then become great, was torn asunder by civil strife, and seemed to be at the point of dismemberment and a likely prey for the vultures of envious nations, one splendid fleet of armed vessels came sailing through the Narrows to this threatened city, while yet another was passing through the Golden Gate of San Francisco. Those ships were the messengers of Russia to America. Their mission bore no taint of selfishness. Sympathy, friendship, and, if need were, practical assistance, were the cargoes consigned in those vessels by the Russian Empire to the American Republic.

Can we hope ever to repay those mighty obligations? Probably not. But there do come times when we may at least indicate our appreciation, and this is one of those times. We are honoured to-night by the presence of the representatives of that great Empire whose fidelity to our interests has never wavered, and, please God, may be everlasting. It would not be seemly in us now to venture judgment upon the merits of the terrible controversy which has just reached its conclusion, but we may go so far, and the whole American people so comprehensively represented in this room to-night will go so far

as to assert that the parchment upon which treaties are written will crumble into dust ages before the fires of deepest gratitude and true fraternity can be extinguished in American hearts.

When the Secretary of State, Mr. Elihu Root, who was one of the chief guests, in his speech congratulated us in cordial and but too flattering terms on the part we had taken in the accomplishment of peace, he added that we had done that which makes for humanity and peace for all time. And in the course of his eloquent speech he uttered in weighty words an eternal truth which mankind is but too apt to forget in the heat of passion born of a great war :

“ It takes more courage to make peace than it takes to make war.”

The speeches were aptly concluded in a lighter vein by President Hadley of Yale University, who wound up his humorous description of our proceedings as treaty negotiators by saying that he admired a man who had the nerve to “ call the other fellow’s gigantic bluff with nothing but a pair ”—adding, “ but then that pair was a pair of Kings ! ” The thunderous applause that greeted his graceful allusion to tactics sometimes successfully resorted to at a game not unknown in this part of the world seemed to puzzle the other “ King,” whom I had to initiate into the mysteries of the game in question when we had returned to our hotel.

The following day we were the guests at luncheon of General and Mrs. Grant at the General’s headquarters on Governor’s Island, where we were received with military honours. On the 8th we dined with President and Mrs. Roosevelt at Oyster Bay, no other guests being present. It was Witte’s farewell audience, Baron Komura, with Mr. Takahira, having been received in the same way on the same day at luncheon. In this, as in everything else connected with the peace negotiations, President Roosevelt showed his fine feeling and the tact which was so natural to him, and completed the irresistible fascination his powerful personality exercised over all those who were brought into closer contact with him. On our way home we naturally spoke of the President ; and, in giving an account of the impression Witte was carrying away, I can do no better than to cite a few lines from a letter he had written to some friend in Europe :



When one speaks with President Roosevelt he charms through the elevation of his thoughts and through that transparent philosophy which permeates his judgment. He has an ideal, and strives for higher aims than a commonplace existence permits. In the stubborn struggles of our day men like Mr. Roosevelt have no leisure, for they are soldiers who cannot be relieved from the danger line.

If it had been Witte's good fortune, as it has been mine, to have read *Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children*, he would have added that profoundly as one must admire the statesman, it is impossible not to love the man.

We spent the next day sight-seeing in the capital, including an excursion to Mount Vernon, and returned the following morning to New York in time for joining Mr. Morgan on board his yacht *Corsair* for an excursion to West Point. At the Military School we were received by General Miles, and witnessed a parade of the cadets. This concluded the series of functions in connection with the execution of the Treaty of Portsmouth, and Witte sailed for Europe on September 12th.

Our close collaboration in the peace work had effaced whatever trace of distrust and animosity might have lingered in his mind. We parted as friends and remained friends to the end. I shall never forget how, in the first weeks of the war, he would come to my little room at the Yacht Club where I was living, simply to unbosom himself of his feelings of anxiety and despair which he knew I was sharing in every respect. He would walk up and down like a caged lion, in impotent rage—a helpless witness of the incompetence and folly that had plunged the nation into the catastrophe of a general war which could only lead to the destruction of his life-work and doom the country to ruin and perdition. We both knew that the end was to come of all that was dear to us and that we had lived for. He, at least, was mercifully spared the agony of witnessing it.

When Witte returned to St. Petersburg he did not meet with the reception which his services entitled him to expect. The Emperor's gratitude took the form of conferring upon him the title of Count, but his enemies did not fail to remark sneeringly that he should have been created Count "Polou-sakhalinsky," which means Count of Half-Sakhalin, a title which, as has been shown in the preceding chapter, was in



reality deserved by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Lamsdorff. The reception Count Witte met with from the majority of the public and the Press hardly gave him much concern. He was justly proud in the consciousness of having faithfully served the best interests of his country, not only for the present but for the future as well. Little did the signatories of the Treaty of Portsmouth dream at the time that they had affixed their names to an instrument which, in all probability, will go down in history as an act marking the close of an era when it was still possible to terminate a great war between leading nations by a peace leaving the door wide open for a re-establishment of friendly relations between them.

Much has been said and written in regard to the right to declare war and to conclude peace, which most constitutions reserve, with or without limitations, to the Sovereign in Monarchies, and to the Head of the State in Republics, and which in autocratically governed countries belongs exclusively to the monarch. The right to declare war is certainly open to the gravest abuse and should be unquestionably surrounded by the most elaborate safeguards. But the right to conclude peace, which at the same time is not only a duty, but the gravest of all duties devolving on the supreme power in a State, would seem to be best placed in the hands of a power as far as possible removed from the effervescence of popular passions of the hour.

The condition of Japan at the time of the Portsmouth Treaty is a case in point. As soon as the inner circle of the Japanese Government had come to the conclusion that the continuation of the war could no longer serve any further reasonable purpose, had become financially onerous and would demand sacrifices of blood and treasure not commensurate to possibly attainable results, they did not hesitate to take the necessary steps to bring about negotiations for peace. Although, in response to popular clamour, they had allowed public opinion to expect a huge war indemnity, the acquisition of the whole Island of Sakhalin, and a number of other exaggerated claims, they were prepared to accept, when confronted with the impossibility of realizing these expectations, and did accept, lesser results, such as were attained by conciliatory negotiations. They had the moral courage and

were able to do so, in calm disregard of popular indignation which almost reached the point of revolutionary outbreaks, because they were not dependent for power on popular favour, and their statesmanlike decision had the approval and unflinching support of their Sovereign, to whose sacred authority the whole nation professes unquestioning obedience.

As regards Russia the case was somewhat different. The war had never been, so to speak, a national war, as it was in the eyes of the Japanese people. The bulk of the nation had accepted it as a disastrous infliction, a dispensation of Providence that had to be borne in patience until the end, and the sooner such end came the better. The revolutionary parties, to whom a prolongation of the war would have furnished an opportunity for widening their criminal agitation, may have been disappointed by the early conclusion of peace, but on the other hand, as they had probably been apprehensive of a victorious peace which might have strengthened the hands of the Government, they had no reason for being dissatisfied with the terms of the Portsmouth Treaty. The bourgeois Liberal parties, for similar reasons, were indifferent to the outcome of the war, or sneeringly acquiescent. Having been opposed to the war from the beginning, they were in a position to say, "We told you so!"

✱ Serious opposition to the conclusion of what now would be called a premature peace came only from military circles and from all those to whom the idea of terminating an inglorious war by a peace without victory came as a painful shock to their patriotism. Foremost among them was the Sovereign himself, moved by love of country no less than by pride and jealous care of the glory of his reign. The more admiration was due to him for having had the moral courage to silence his personal feelings and to conclude an unpopular peace as soon as he had been convinced that this sacrifice was demanded of him in the interest of his country and his people.

But both nations owed a debt of profound gratitude to the great statesman who had the wise insight to realize that the indefinite continuation of a war which could only end in the exhaustion of one or both of them could not possibly serve the true and permanent interests of either side, nor of the rest of mankind, and who had the moral courage

to undertake the delicate task of mediation between them, undeterred by the apprehension of being considered a pacifist. This debt of gratitude was frankly and unreservedly acknowledged by the rulers of both nations, however great may have been the disappointment of the militaristic elements on both sides, in whose eyes a war would naturally be considered rather in the light of a prize fight, that can only be terminated with honour by a knockout blow. In the eyes of history, however, President Roosevelt's success in bringing about the Portsmouth Conference, and the consequent termination of the war by a peace of justice and conciliation, will ever be regarded as the crowning achievement of his brilliant career as a statesman.

In the accomplishment of his delicate task, President Roosevelt was most efficiently seconded by the American Ambassador to Russia, Mr. George von L. Meyer, who displayed a singularly quick perception, unerring judgment and skilful handling of the human material he had to deal with. He was at pains to render ungrudging justice to the efficiency of the aid received from his representative. In his *Autobiography* (pages 586 and 587) President Roosevelt, referring to the negotiations connected with the Portsmouth Conference, writes as follows :

During the course of the negotiations I tried to enlist the aid of the Governments of one nation which was friendly to Russia and of another nation which was friendly to Japan in helping to bring about peace. I got no aid from either. I did, however, receive aid from the Emperor of Germany. His Ambassador at St. Petersburg was the one Ambassador who helped the American Ambassador, Mr. Meyer, at delicate and doubtful points of the negotiation. Mr. Meyer, who was, with the exception of Mr. White, the most useful diplomat in the American service, rendered literally invaluable aid by insisting upon himself seeing the Tsar at critical periods of the transaction, when it was no longer possible for me to act successfully through the representatives of the Tsar, who were often at cross-purposes with one another. [As regards this latter statement, the President, I think, was labouring under some misapprehension. I have already made it clear that Witte and I had on the very day of his arrival in New York reached a complete agreement as to the conditions of peace we could accept, as well as to the conduct of the negotiations.]

In looking through the pages of the *Biography of George*



*von Lengerke Meyer*, by M. A. de Wolfe Howe, I note an extract from a personal letter the Ambassador had written to President Roosevelt on the subject of the presentation of his letters of credence to the Emperor Nicholas, which I take the liberty of quoting here, as it permits an estimate of the delicacy of the situation he had to deal with and in the end dealt with most successfully :

I had hoped (writes Mr. Meyer) I should see the Emperor alone, as the English Ambassador had told me that the young Empress was influencing her husband to continue the war and gain a victory. I delivered my instructions as cabled by Adeo on March 27th, and she drew nearer and never took her eyes off the Tsar. When I pronounced the words, "At a proper season, when the two warring nations are willing, the President would gladly use his impartial good offices toward the realization of an honourable and lasting peace alike advantageous to the parties and beneficial to the world," His Majesty looked embarrassed and then said, "I am very glad to hear it," but instantly turned the conversation upon another subject, never alluding to it again.

Soon after we had become settled at the Embassy at Washington the news from Russia began to assume a more and more threatening character. It was no longer the premonitory rumbling of a coming but still distant storm; it was the beginning of the Russian Revolution ! The curtain had definitely risen on the first act of the most awful tragedy the world has ever seen.

In order to convey to the reader an understanding of the tragic events the sequel of which it became my fate to witness, it will be necessary to examine the remote and deep-lying causes which, in my opinion, were leading up to the inevitable final catastrophe that all human effort was powerless to avert.

Among these causes we have, in the first place, to consider the national psychology of the Great Russian race, the dominant race in the conglomerate of races and creeds that went to constitute the body politic of the Russian Empire that was. The most illuminating elucidation of this point I find in an article published some time ago in the *New York Evening Post*, from the pen of a distinguished countryman of mine, Count Alexander Soltykoff. I could not, I think, do better than quote in part what he says on the subject. After stating his conviction that the whole character of the



Russian nation, as shown in the course of Russia's development, will prevent any restoration of order as long as Russians, of whatever party, are alone entrusted with the work, he continues :

On what idea of Russian national character is this conviction based ? On two ideas which are entirely contrary to one another, and yet both are entirely true. These oppositions in Russian character are one of the most surprising facts of national psychology. There is, first, a peaceful, contemplative, self-denying, mystically inclined Russia. Of this Russia a striking delineation is given in the famous picture "Holy Russia" of our painter Nesteroff. There is a second Russia which is as savage, unscrupulous and bloodthirsty as the first Russia is holy. This is the Russia, not of the painter Nesteroff, but the Russia of elemental chaos ; the Russia of the savage Cossack anarchy of olden time ; of the present-day madness ; of the rebel Pugatcheff ; of the wholesale country mansion burnings known as illuminations in 1905 and 1918 ; a Russia of robbery, intoxication, greed and wickedness, which is Byzantine to the marrow and full of every corruption and injustice ; the Russia of the mass murders of Ivan the Terrible and the mass terror of Lenin. The weak and resigned Russia of Nesteroff and the raging and blasphemous Russia of Lenin are equally genuine faces of the same double-headed nation. That fact runs through all our history, beginning with our Scythian forerunners, whose character was such that they were given the rôle of executioners in Greek tragedy, but who were also good-natured and generous and had distinct artistic instincts. The anarchical inconsistencies of Russian national character to-day are nothing but the ancient chaos of Scythia. Nearly all Russian characteristics make for oppositions, anarchy and chaos. The Russian likes primitive, rudimentary and mechanical things. He detests moderation, which he regards as compulsion, while order seems to him violence and power arbitrariness. He does not like civilization, which is order and subordination ; and the only equality he understands is the equality of chaos.

These characteristics, although too widely generalized and presented by Count Soltykoff in an exaggerated form, are nevertheless substantially true and go far towards explaining why, directly the restraining power of the State—let us call it Monarchy or Autocracy or Tsarism—was suppressed, the nation lapsed into a condition of mild anarchy, seemingly innocuous in the beginning—which accounts for the pæans of rapture with which the "Bloodless Revolution," the "Triumph of Democracy," and the "Dawn of Liberty" were hailed by public opinion all over the world—

but which was bound to end in the unspeakable horrors of the bloody terrorism in whose grip Russia has been agonizing ever since.

But these national characteristics do not throw a sufficient light on the causes which created conditions so exceptionally favourable to the success of our revolutionary parties. These causes must be sought for partly in the general trend of the country's historical development, partly in the vaguely socialistic, or rather communistic, doctrine adopted as the basic principle of the agrarian reform, as well as in the introduction of universal military service, and in the direction of the Government policies pursued ever since the epoch of the great reforms of the Emperor Alexander II.

Russia's historical development as a European Power dates, properly speaking, only from the time of Peter the Great. That truly great monarch's political genius made him realize that his country's salvation could only lie in its thorough Europeanization and its definitive breaking loose from the fetters of its barbaric and Byzantine past. He set to work with an energy and consistency second only to the savage ruthlessness of a Lenin, and by creating an all-powerful bureaucracy on the Prussian model, and an efficient Army, as well as by forcing upon a part of the upper crust of the people a thin veneer of Western civilization, he succeeded in causing Russia to be accepted, on a footing of equality, as a member of the family of European nations. But in reaching the goal of his ambition he had unwittingly laid the foundation of a condition the logical development of which was to become one of the chief elements making for the country's downfall and ruin—the sharply defined divisions of the nation into two classes: on top the educated class or “Intelligentzia,” comprising all educated people, officials, business and professional men as well as revolutionary socialists and anarchists; and below, the masses, the bulk of the nation and its mainstay, the peasantry steeped in darkness and ignorance. As time went on and Western culture was sinking deeper roots and penetrating into wider circles of the upper crust, leaving the masses almost untouched, the gulf dividing the two numerically monstrously unequal parts of the nation was becoming ever more impassable, creating between them an atmosphere of mutual non-

comprehension, fruitful of ineradicable distrust, undying hatred and bitter contempt.

And when, at the moment of the supreme crisis, the childish incompetence and helpless imbecility of the ruling bureaucracy had let slip from its palsied hands the reins of power, it was that same fateful veil of non-comprehension which obscured the vision of their still more incompetent and still more helpless successors, and caused them to suffer the reins of power to be seized by a sinister mountebank of socialism, with the result that after his speedy and ignominious collapse the nation found itself abandoned to the tender mercies of a crew of fanatic visionaries, with their following of murderous bandits who have turned a once great and prosperous Empire into a primitive wilderness of barbarism, a prison, a lunatic asylum and a slaughter-house.

The reader may be astonished at my comprising in the same class with professional and business people such extreme elements as officialdom, including reactionary obscurantism, on one side and revolutionary parties, including socialists and anarchists, on the other. The explanation, however, is a simple one. They all are part and parcel of the "Intelligentzia," as well as of the nation, and of the race to which they belong, and have therefore an equal share in essential national or racial characteristics; such, for instance, as a certain proneness to anarchy, as Count Soltykoff rightly points out in his article. If anarchy can be at work below, it can also function above. That that was the case has been amply proved. Such an institution as the notorious "Okhranka"—in English, "Bureau of Protection" or "of Public Safety"—invested with almost unlimited discretionary powers, the character of whose truly anarchic activity has been sufficiently stigmatized by the proven fact that it used to have in its employ agents like the phenomenal villain Azeff, who made it a practice to organize murders of Grand Dukes and Ministers, and at the same time to betray perpetrators of these crimes and their accomplices to the secret police—has undoubtedly, by exciting public indignation and exasperation to fever-heat, contributed powerfully towards creating a situation relief from which seemed to many well-meaning and loyal people possible only through a revolutionary overthrow of the Government.



It has, moreover, demonstrated its own utter inefficiency since all these Lenins, Trozskys, Zinovieffs and other Bolshevik leaders, whatever their revolutionary pseudonyms may be, have, at one time or other, been in the clutches of the Okhranka, been inhabitants of Russian State prisons, or been political exiles in Siberia, from which they, apparently, have had no great difficulty in escaping—a circumstance which, by the way, seems to justify some doubts as to the veracity of many of the stories of the frightful cruelties said to have been practised on political prisoners and exiles in Russia and Siberia, stories which for years have been assiduously spread by Russian revolutionists and their friends.

This proneness to anarchy noted by Count Soltykoff as a national characteristic, which at the extremities of the social scale is apt to take the form, at one end, of open revolt against law and order, and, at the other, of lawless tyranny, manifests itself in the mentality of the nation as a whole, in its present stage of political development, as an absence of that reverence for and unquestioning submission to the majesty of the law which alone can render a nation fit for a republican form of government as it should be; that is to say, a government of laws and not of men.

One of the consequences of the historical development of the nation, with its enforced and artificially fostered assimilation to Western culture and civilization, apart from the complete cultural separation of the classes from the masses, has been the creation and gradual growth of what must be called an intellectual proletariat. From the very beginning of Peter the Great's reformatory activity the necessity made itself felt of providing for a constant supply of human material competent to fill the ranks of the newly created bureaucracy, which, at first, was organized and functioned with the aid and under the supervision of foreigners. To fill this want various educational establishments, colleges and Universities, were being gradually founded and endowed with special privileges, opening to their graduates access to positions in the civil service, for which the possession of a college or University degree was made compulsory. The chances of securing permanent salaried positions in the civil service, as well as an ample supply of small scholarships, enabling even the poorest students to struggle through a course of



studies, attracted to the Universities a constantly growing number of youths such as in other countries would have gone into trade or business. The result was that the supply of duly patented candidates for positions in the Government service began to outrun the demand to an ever-increasing extent, and that numberless young men without qualifications for any other career were left to shift for themselves, penniless and embittered by failure to secure the coveted prize, filling the ranks of a disgruntled intellectual proletariat, and an easy prey to the blandishments of revolutionary agitators of every description.

Given the proneness of the national mentality to a certain vague idealism, it is not surprising that they should have felt particularly attracted to the new faith which is taking the place of the waning belief in revealed religion, with its promises of eternal bliss beyond the grave, by holding out to suffering humanity the assurance of felicity to be attained here and now by the simple process of "socialization" of the means of production and the abolition of private property. It was thus that our Universities had to some extent become the breeding places for the army of revolutionary socialism which, with truly religious fanaticism, was working at the destruction of the social fabric of the State in order to erect on its ruins the fantastic structure of its socialistic Utopia. The realization of this wild dream in oceans of blood and tears the world is witnessing at present, seemingly unconscious of its sinister meaning and menace to our race and to civilization.

If, now, we turn to the conditions which rendered it possible for the revolutionary parties to raise in revolt the immense but inert and inarticulate mass of the peasantry—the bulk and mainstay of the nation—the root of the evil will be discovered in the agrarian reform which accompanied the emancipation of the serfs little more than half a century ago, and in the basic principles on which the reform was planned.

In the first place, the reform recognized in principle the right of the serfs to the ownership of some part of the land they had been tilling for centuries in the service of their masters. The adoption of this principle meant, on the one hand, an invasion of the right of property in the land, whether

acquired by inheritance of ancestral land grants, dating back sometimes hundreds of years, or by purchase, thereby subverting the very idea of the inviolability of a right which is the foundation of the structure of all civilized society; and, on the other hand, it did not go far enough to satisfy the conception by the serfs of their rights as illustrated by the familiar slogan, applied to their relations to their masters: "We are yours, but the land is ours."

Serfdom having been abolished, there were no more masters, and consequently the land—all the land, not merely a small part of it—they thought was to become theirs. It was easy to see what a hold this conception of their rights, in its logical simplicity, was bound to have on the untutored minds of the peasantry. Therefore, when they found that they had been deceived in their expectations, and that whatever little land had been allotted to them, instead of being a free gift, would have to be redeemed by annual payments, it was but natural that they should have concluded that such cruel injustice could only have been inflicted on them through the treachery and deceit of faithless officials, acting under the influence of their powerful, greedy landlords, in defiance and frustration of the benevolent intentions of an all-gracious and all-merciful Tsar.

Another feature of the settlement of the agrarian question at the time of the emancipation of the serfs led to the most disastrous consequences, inasmuch as it was the direct cause of a gradual and most serious impoverishment of the peasantry, of a marked deterioration of agriculture and a corresponding decrease of its productiveness over an immense expanse of arable land in the possession of the peasantry. It consisted in the allotment of the land taken from the estate owners, not to individual peasants in personal ownership, but to their village communities in communal ownership. In devising this plan the statesmen who fathered it had seemingly a double object in view: first, and so to speak incidentally, to facilitate the collection of the taxes destined to cover the interest and amortization of the bonds which had to be issued to the estate owners in redemption of their lands allotted to the peasantry; and secondly—this was evidently the main point—to prevent the formation of a rural landless proletariat by assuring to every peasant an inalienable share

in the communal property. The originators of this plan, inspired, apparently, by that dreamy idealism, tainted with vague socialistic or communistic leanings so characteristic of the national mentality, had evidently lost sight of a simple circumstance which was obviously bound in the long run not only to defeat the main object they had in view, but also to render even superficial culture of the soil by traditional methods more and more difficult, and any attempts at improved intensive culture a matter of sheer impossibility—I mean the gradual increase of the population belonging to a naturally prolific race, which would unavoidably necessitate from time to time a redistribution of the individual shares in the common property and their ultimate parcelling into strips of land of such diminutive dimensions as to render them unfit for any kind of cultivation. It is needless to insist on the dangerous character of the discontent which the gradual impoverishment of the peasantry, mainly due to this mediæval system of communal land tenure, was bound to breed.

I have mentioned above the introduction of universal short-time military service as one of the contributory causes facilitating a successful revolution. In olden days, when our comparatively small standing Army was a strictly professional one, it could, although drafted by conscription from a rather peaceful peasantry, be drilled, thanks to the length of compulsory service (twenty-five years) into an extremely efficient, in those days perhaps the most efficient, fighting force in Europe, and could be implicitly relied upon to render any successful revolutionary movement a matter of impossibility. Not so, however, our modern Army of enormous size, drafted for a short-term service from a peasantry seething with discontent and hatred of the class to which its officers belong. Not only could it not be relied on for the repression of a serious revolutionary outbreak, but it constituted a very dangerous element which, as subsequent events have demonstrated, was liable at any time to take an active part in a revolution, or even to initiate one itself.

Such was the threatening aspect of the situation when Count Witte was appealed to, shortly after his return from Portsmouth, to take hold of affairs with which the Government of the day had shown itself incompetent to deal.



## CHAPTER XXVI

Count Witte appointed Prime Minister—Manifesto of October 1905—  
Constitutional reform — Resignation of Witte — Treaty of Bjorkoe —  
Stolypin.

THE situation which at last compelled an appeal to the statesmanship of Count Witte had become one of extreme gravity. The revolutionary ferment had spread all over the country, news of riots and disorders were arriving from all sides, mutinies and insubordination in the Navy, burning and looting of country houses, strikes of workmen in all branches of industry as well as of employees of railroads, posts and telegraphs, formation of a union of all the professional unions, all communications by rail, post or telegraph cut, the whole revolutionary movement directed by a so-called "Council of Workmen's Delegates," prototype of the Soviets of our days, presided over by a country lawyer, Nossar, known by his revolutionary surname, Khroustaleff; in a word, a state of almost complete anarchy, relieved only by the fact that the troops of the guard stationed at St. Petersburg were still faithful to their oath, and could in an emergency have suppressed any open revolt. One of the most disquieting features of the situation was the attitude of the educated classes, wavering between fatalistic helplessness and more or less open sentimental sympathy with the revolutionary movement, evidently born of non-comprehension of its sinister meaning. Count Witte, who realized the impossibility of continuing to carry on the government without the support of the educated classes, undertook to convince the Emperor of the necessity of constitutional reforms. In his endeavours he was, at the last moment, energetically assisted by the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholaevitch (late Supreme Commander-in-Chief of our Armies), who must surely have realized the danger to the throne and to the dynasty of an obstinate clinging to the



antiquated and thoroughly discredited regime of autocracy. The Emperor had, moreover, been prepared to listen to similar advices by a letter from his mother, the Empress Dowager Marie Feodorovna, who was then at Copenhagen on a visit to her brother, King Frederick VIII of Denmark.

The late Mr. Iswolsky, who was at the time Minister to the Danish Court, and soon to be appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, relates in the first chapter of his "Reminiscences," printed in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of June 1, 1919, how he had succeeded, with the aid of the King, in convincing the Empress of the necessity for the Emperor to consent while it was yet time to make reasonable concessions to the moderate Liberal parties in order to secure their support in resisting the exaggerated demands of the Radicals and the Revolutionists. The Empress consented to write a letter to her son advising him to grant a constitution to Russia spontaneously, and Iswolsky undertook to deliver this letter personally to the Emperor and to plead for the acceptance by His Majesty of his mother's wise advice.

From what I knew of Count Witte's way of thinking, after the weeks spent at Portsmouth in intimate intercourse with him, I felt fully convinced of his absolute sincerity in taking a decided stand in favour of a constitutional form of government in Russia. Nor did I doubt that at the same time he considered it necessary, in admitting the educated classes to a share in determining the policies of the Government, to provide some safeguards enabling it to resist political tendencies born of their, as yet, total inexperience in affairs of State, which might turn out to be detrimental to the nation. These were questions which occupied our minds hardly less than the most important work we had in hand, and we frequently discussed them from every point of view. I remember telling him of a conversation I once had with Prince Ito (then Mr. Ito) on a similar subject, when the question of the introduction of a constitutional regime was under discussion by the Japanese Government. That great statesman—with Cavour, the creator of modern Italy, one of the four great constructive statesmen of the nineteenth century whose work has endured and not been wrecked in disaster and anarchy as that of Bismarck and Porfirio Diaz—thought that it would not be safe to place at once in

the inexperienced hands of elected representatives of the people the uncontrolled power of the purse, and he was in favour of some stipulation in the constitution empowering Ministers, in case of Parliament refusing to vote supplies, to carry on the government on the basis of the Budget law of the preceding year.

Witte's views on these momentous questions were those of a patriot and a statesman of wide and mature experience, who, during a decade, had wielded the most powerful influence in the Government, although officially exercising only the functions of Minister of Finance.

The very fact of Witte's having been called back to power by the Sovereign, who, in taking this step, had to conquer his personal dislike and distrust of him, meant an open recognition of the superiority of his statesmanship and of his unique qualifications for the part of steersman of the ship of State at a time of the gravest peril. To a society, however, whose mentality is influenced partly by the characteristic national leaning towards a vague communistic ideal of equality, partly by atavistic tendencies born of centuries of slavery and which is intolerant of any kind of superiority save that of the master, the sudden elevation of Witte to the Premiership of the first Constitutional Government arrayed against him the jealous and envious of all parties, the Liberals considering him unworthy of confidence, and the reactionaries suspecting him of aiming at the presidency of a future Republic! The consequences of this condition of things, which Witte was powerless to counteract, were disastrous, as will be shown presently.

As soon as the Emperor had given his consent to the projected constitutional reform it became necessary to apprise the nation of the momentous decision taken by the Sovereign. Witte's idea was to have this done by the publication of a report addressed by him to the Emperor and endorsed by His Majesty's approval, embodying the outlines of the plan to be followed by the Government in preparing the necessary legislative enactments for the introduction of the new constitutional regime. The publication of this report he deemed sufficient to allay the impatience of the nation, and it would have allowed the Government sufficient time to prepare without undue haste the draft of

the new constitution and the legislative enactments necessary to render it effective. But Witte's idea, inspired solely by prudence and experience in practical statecraft, was seized upon by some of the reactionary elements surrounding the Throne and hostile to him in order to represent it as an attempt on his part to monopolize the glory of having secured for the nation a constitution, whereas the Sovereign, having seen fit to limit his own autocratic power, should receive the whole credit for this act of renunciation. The defect of this reasoning was that, although securing to the Sovereign exclusive credit for his act of renunciation, it would at the same time leave with him the entire responsibility for an act of such paramount importance to the State and would render it impossible for him, without a breach of faith, to recede from a position which circumstances might subsequently prove to have been taken up prematurely and therefore to be untenable. Witte's plan obviated the possibility of the Sovereign being placed in a position of having to choose between persistence in a line of policy which he might have come to consider impracticable and dangerous to the State and a breach of his plighted troth, inasmuch as it would always have remained open to him to alter the course of his policy by a dismissal of the Minister responsible for its adoption. It was plain, therefore, that Witte should have been held free from any reproach of disloyalty to the Crown, or of being unworthy of the confidence of the Liberal parties. Unfortunately he did not escape the one any more than the other—unfortunately, I mean, not for his sake, but for the sake of the nation, which for the eight remaining years of his life was deprived of the invaluable services of her greatest statesman.

The counsels of Witte's adversaries prevailed, and it was decided that an Imperial manifesto should be published simultaneously with Witte's report approved and endorsed by the Emperor. Witte, I believe, much against his better judgment, had to yield the point, and undertook to frame the manifesto which was published on October 17/30, 1905, at the same time as his report to the Emperor.

In view of its historical importance, I reproduce here the text of the manifesto:

We, Nicholas II, by the Grace of God, Emperor and Autocrat



## THE MANIFESTO OF OCTOBER 1905 293

of All the Russias, etc., etc., declare to all Our faithful subjects that the troubles and agitation in Our capitals and in numerous other places fill Our heart with excessive pain and sorrow.

The happiness of the Russian Sovereign is indissolubly bound up with the happiness of Our people, and the sorrow of Our people is the sorrow of the Sovereign.

From the present disorders may arise great national disruption. They menace the integrity and unity of Our Empire.

The supreme duty imposed upon Us by Our Sovereign office requires us to efface Ourselves and to use all the force and reason at Our command to hasten in securing the unity and co-ordination of the Central Government and to assure the success of measures for pacification in all circles of public life which are essential to the well-being of Our people.

We therefore direct Our Government to carry out Our inflexible will :

1. To grant the people the immutable foundations of civil liberty, based on real inviolability of the person, freedom of conscience, speech, meetings and associations.

2. Without deferring the elections to the State Duma already ordered, to call to participation in the Duma (as far as it is possible in view of the shortness of the time before assembling of the Duma) those classes of the population now completely deprived of electoral rights, leaving the ultimate development of the principle of electoral right in general to the newly established legislative order.

3. To establish as an immutable rule that no law can ever come into force without the approval of the State Duma and that the elected of the people were secured a possibility for real participation in supervising the legality of the acts of authorities appointed by Us.

We appeal to all faithful sons of Russia to remember their duty towards the Fatherland, to aid in terminating these unprecedented troubles and to apply all their forces in co-operation with Us to the restoration of calm and peace upon our native soil.

Given at Peterhof, October the 17/30, in the eleventh year of Our Reign.

The text of this important document bears unmistakable traces of the haste which, under the circumstances, was unavoidable in its composition. It establishes, however, beyond cavil, the following points : (1) The transformation of the purely consultative State Duma into a legislative assembly elected on the basis of a widely extended right of suffrage and invested with the right of supervision of the legality of the acts of the constituted authorities ; and (2) the grant of the fundamental liberties : inviolability of the person, liberty of conscience, of speech, of meetings and of associations ; in a word, the grant of a constitution. It was in this sense



that the public understood the manifesto, and it was accordingly received at first with general rejoicing. "The Council of Workmen's Delegates" in the capital took, however, a different view, as appears from a resolution passed by them on the very next day, October 18th, in which they declared that the "fighting revolutionary proletariat cannot lay down its arms until the time when the political rights of the Russian people will be established on solid foundations, until there will be established a democratic republic, the best means for the further struggle of the proletariat for socialism."<sup>1</sup> The very wording of this resolution cannot leave any doubt as to its authorship in the mind of anyone acquainted with the mental outlook of the deluded victims whom the revolutionary leaders utilize as cannon fodder in their criminal warfare against the social order and the welfare of their country. On the other hand, the vagueness of the terms of the manifesto granting the new liberties and the absence of any legislative enactments regulating their use could not fail to cause the gravest misunderstandings between the authorities and the populations. Reports began to pour in, from all over the country, of disorders, riots, mutinies in the fleet and even in the Army in Manchuria, which was still in the beginning of its demobilization.

But the deadliest blow to the new regime was dealt by the very parties whose dream of a national representation was about to be realized. If Witte had succeeded in convincing the Emperor of the necessity of a fundamental constitutional reform, it could only have been by holding out the hope that by satisfying the reasonable and moderate aspirations of the educated classes the Government would secure their support in the fight against the subversive demands of the revolutionary parties. With his appointment as Prime Minister, Witte had been given a free hand as regards the composition of his Cabinet. He summoned to St. Petersburg the leaders of all the Liberal parties with a view to elaborate in common a working programme that was to place the new regime on a working basis. Not one of these gentlemen was found willing to collaborate with the great statesman who had secured for the nation the

<sup>1</sup> See *Modern Russian History*, by Alexander Kornilov, translated by Alexander S. Kaun, page 309.

grant of a constitution and to enter the Cabinet he was endeavouring to form from their own midst. No plea of want of confidence could justifiably be put forward in palliation of this betrayal—for such it was—not only of Witte but also of their own cause by these party leaders, some of whom have had occasion, subsequently when power was literally thrust upon them, to demonstrate their helpless incompetence when the fate of the country was hanging in the balance. It would not, perhaps, be fair to taunt them with their inability to free themselves from that spirit of spiteful partisanship so prevalent among our politicians, nor is it surprising that they failed to understand the serious meaning of the blow they were unwittingly dealing to the cause of Constitutional Government in Russia by their refusal to collaborate with Witte in its initial organization, considering that they never had had—nor could have had under existing conditions of public life—any experience in practical politics, their political ideas being mostly derived from booklearning and seldom from actual observation of political life in more advanced countries. But it is impossible not to share the feelings of bitter disappointment and indignation which Witte must have experienced in finding that the hope he had held out to the Emperor was belied by the attitude of those very elements on whose patriotic support he had thought to rely. His failure strengthened the hands of his reactionary adversaries and destroyed whatever value his political advice may still have had in the eyes of the Sovereign. Witte, however, remained in office, but was reduced to the necessity of forming a Cabinet composed of bureaucrats, among whom the most unpopular was Peter Durnorvo, the new Minister of the Interior, a man of iron will and undaunted courage, whatever his political opinions may have been. Within a few months he succeeded in putting down with the strong arm revolutionary outbreaks and agrarian outrages all over the country. To the steadfast resolution and unflinching energy of this much-maligned—and most unjustly maligned—statesman the country unquestionably owed her escape from the catastrophe that was to overtake her eight years later.

Much has been made of grossly and palpably exaggerated cruelties said to have been committed in the repression

of revolutionary outbreaks and of excessive punishments inflicted on revolutionary suspects. These stories were industriously spread far and wide for obvious propaganda purposes by our revolutionists and their sympathizers and by well-meaning but credulous "friends of Russian liberty" in foreign countries, at a time when the world had not yet become awake to the danger lurking in revolutionary socialism beneath a mask of generous engrossment with the problem of organizing the felicity of mankind. Outside critics of the late Imperial Government—whatever its sins, its defects and its disastrous shortcomings, which I would certainly be the last to palliate—are too apt to forget that to defend itself against revolution is the prime duty of every Government worthy of the name, as guardian of law and order, a duty not only to itself, but no less to its country. The world has now had an opportunity to see into what an abyss of ruin and desolation the failure of a Government to defend itself has plunged a once great and prosperous nation.

By the beginning of March the situation had improved sufficiently to render it possible to take the next step in the introduction of constitutional reform.

On the 5th of that month a manifesto was published announcing that the two bodies composing the Parliament (the Council of the Empire and the Duma) would be convoked and prorogued annually by Imperial Ukase; that the Council of the Empire would consist of an equal number of elected members and of members nominated by the Emperor; that both bodies would have equal legislative powers and that only measures passed by both bodies might be submitted for the Emperor's decision. The manifesto further provided that during suspensions of the sittings of the Duma, should extraordinary circumstances arise calling for legislative action, the Council of Ministers might submit for the Emperor's decision measures called for in order to meet such extraordinary circumstances, such measures ceasing to be in force, if within two months after the resumption of the sittings of the Duma no Bill embodying the provisions therein contained were introduced, or if such Bill were rejected by the Duma or by the Council of the Empire.

By subsequent ukases issued prior to the meeting of the first Duma certain limitations of the competency of



the legislative bodies were established and made part of the fundamental laws. They concerned mostly financial matters. The two Houses could not deal with estimates founded on existing laws, ordinances or Imperial commands, or with credits for war or the Imperial household. Ordinary military and naval expenditures were to be discussed if the Ministries could not cover them from resources in hand. If the Houses did not pass the Budget, the Government could substitute the Budget of the preceding year. Details of loans and currency were reserved to the Minister of Finance; Army, Navy and Foreign Affairs were declared prerogatives of the Emperor.

From the above it will be seen that these new fundamental laws, although falling short of the established principles and usages of the unwritten British Constitution as gradually worked out by centuries of peaceful evolution, contained nevertheless the basic principles of representative government. In spite of the exemption from the competency of the legislative bodies of questions concerning the estimates of certain branches of the Government, mainly those in charge of national defence, what was really stipulated was their fixation at a level below which their cutting down by Parliament was excluded, leaving, however, any eventual increase of such estimates dependent on the consent of the representatives of the people, no less than the establishment of any new taxes; in a word, establishing the principle of "no taxation without representation." Likewise the legislative power granted to Parliament was complete, inasmuch as no new law could be made operative without the consent of both Houses, the question of amendments to the constitution or fundamental laws being alone excluded from their competency.

To any unprejudiced mind it must be plain that these restrictions of the legislative power of our new Parliament were fully justified, the political development of the nation rendering such safeguards not only desirable but necessary, for it could hardly be questioned that the Russian people of our days are as little ripe for a strictly parliamentary government such as that of Great Britain as the English people would have been ripe for it, say, in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. Moreover, the necessity of these



limitations and the wisdom of their introduction were amply demonstrated by the openly revolutionary attitude at once adopted by the first Duma and followed up by the second, which necessitated their speedy dissolution.

As author of the October manifesto, or in other words as the actual originator of the constitutional reform, Count Witte was the object of attacks from all sides. In the eyes of the Liberal Party, besides being belated, which was not his fault, the reform did not go far enough, and by the Conservative Party it was deemed premature in the scope it had assumed. To both the extreme parties the whole reform was an object of detestation and contempt. The Socialistic Revolutionary Party, whose real aim was the overthrow of the whole social structure in the interest of the realization of their socialistic Utopia, were openly hostile to a reform which, by promising to satisfy the ambitions of the "bourgeois" classes, threatened to deprive them of the moral support of some of them who in their eagerness for power and their purblind political inexperience had favoured part of their revolutionary programme, such as the expropriation of the lands of estate owners, their principal stock in trade for revolutionizing the deluded peasantry. The Socialist Party, as a matter of fact, boycotted the elections to the first Duma and replied to the October manifesto by a recrudescence of terroristic crimes. To the ultra-reactionary party, firm believers in the necessity, for the good of the country, of the strictest maintenance of the autocratic regime, the idea of a constitution was an abomination, and the very word "constitution" a stench in their nostrils. They favoured a political organization known as the "Union of the Russian People," which by its excesses in its anti-revolutionary activity earned the surname of "The Black Hundred," and, rendering no real service to the cause of law and order, merely served to discredit its protectors.

With the question of the insufficiency of the scope of the constitutional reform—the chief grievance of the Liberal Party—I have dealt already, and hope to have made it clear that the constitution in the shape it was granted responded fully to the real needs of the country in the actual stage of her historical development. It would have, subject to gradual evolution, assured the peaceful progress of the nation

on the path of liberty and prosperity in the future but for the advent of the World War. For Russia's having been involved in it, as well as for the subsequent revolution with its sequel of the downfall and ruin of the country, impartial history will assign to the Liberal parties and their leaders their share of responsibility.

As for the unquestionable and deplorable belatedness of the reform, I can only repeat that its inception was cut short by the cowardly assassination of the Tsar Liberator Alexander II, the foulest and in its consequences the most fatal crime in the history of the world, the infamous work of these same revolutionary parties, whose natural offspring is " bolshevism," and whose representatives, after having done their share in bringing about the destruction of the State and the ruin of the nation, have now the incredible hardihood to pose abroad as " loyal Russians " and would-be saviours of our unhappy country.

That the Conservative Party, or at least some of its adherents, should have thought that the introduction of the constitutional reform in the shape in which it was effected was somewhat premature was perhaps but natural. They would probably have preferred to have the reform limited in the beginning to the creation of a Duma with merely consultative functions. But then, whether right or wrong, the attempt had been made and had failed not only to allay the revolutionary agitation, but also to satisfy the greater part of the educated classes.

Another question might be raised, namely, whether the moment of the promulgation of the manifesto was wisely chosen. I have heard the question answered in the negative by one of the foreign bankers who had come to St. Petersburg to arrange for the great loan, needed for covering the financial losses of the war. He thought that the publication of the manifesto, before the general strike had been liquidated, revolutionary outbreaks suppressed and law and order restored everywhere in the country, had been a grave mistake because it had not only utterly failed of its intended effect of pacification, but enabled the revolutionists to claim that whatever promise of reform had been given in the manifesto had been extorted from the Government under their compulsion, and thereby had emboldened them to

redouble their revolutionary activity. I must confess that at first, judging *a priori* and from the other side of the globe, I felt inclined to share this view of the situation taken by an evidently unbiased judge. Witte's failure to deal more promptly and energetically with the revolutionary situation had, indeed, been one of the main points of the accusation brought against him by his political adversaries and to some extent believed in by the public. I heard that on one occasion, at the time when trouble was at its height and civilized existence at St. Petersburg, owing to the general strike, had become almost impossible, Count Witte, at a dinner party at one of the great houses, was attacked by the ladies present for his failure to put a stop to the intolerable state of affairs in the capital. He replied that of course it would have been easy enough to have done so with the strong arm in the very beginning, but that then everybody would have been down on a Government of "reactionaries," "police tyrants," and so forth, and that, perhaps, it had not come amiss to have let "Society" have a foretaste of what anarchy, even in its initial stages, really meant. Witte's words—if correctly reported—would now have sounded like a warning addressed to "limousine radicals" and "parlour bolsheviks" of our days. As an illustration of the attitude of a certain part of the "bourgeois" society of that time I have heard that when the well-known Professor Martens, with most laudable public spirit, had organized quite a crew of young society people to take care of the sorting of letters at the Post Office and their delivery in town, several of these volunteer postmen met with flat refusals to accept delivery of letters from strike-breakers and minions of reactionary Tsarism. I believe, however, that the real cause of Witte's failure to act with greater vigour from the very beginning was that the Government did not at the time dispose of sufficient means to do so. Although the guards were faithful to their oath, this was by no means the case in the Navy, nor even in parts of the Army returning from Manchuria, the immense expanse of the country being practically denuded of troops and that part of the ever-loyal Cossack forces which was not in Manchuria was not numerous enough to supply the deficiency.

In fulfilment of the promise given in the October manifesto,



the electoral law, which had been devised in view of the creation of a merely consultative Duma, was amended by vastly extending the electoral franchise in such a way as to ensure the election to the new Duma of the largest possible number of peasant deputies. Curiously enough great reliance seems to have been placed on this device by even so astute and experienced a statesman as Count Witte, in the hope of securing in the peasant element in the Duma, with its time-honoured loyalty and devotion to the Tsar, a counterpoise to the expected and dreaded majority of the Liberal Opposition parties. These hopes, which were doomed to be very soon disappointed by the course of events, were based on a totally erroneous conception of the real mentality of the masses of the peasantry—a fresh illustration of the baneful influence of the separation of the governing class from the bulk of the nation, which has been the curse of our country ever since the days of Peter the Great. It seems not to have been realized at all that the one thing the peasantry hoped for and expected to obtain from the Duma was the expropriation of the lands of the estate owners and the division of these lands between them; that is to say, an act of spoliation to which the Government could not possibly give their consent. Possibly also the Government had underrated the importance and the serious effect of the propaganda the revolutionary parties had been carrying on for years among the peasantry along these lines, as well as of the fact that the principle of forcible expropriation of the lands of medium and large landholders had latterly been endorsed by much the strongest and best organized of the Liberal parties under the leadership of Professor Miliukoff, a man personally of very estimable character, gifted with a strong will and rare energy, but as a politician afflicted with a strangely short-sighted and incurable doctrinaireism allied to an extraordinary obstinacy. Be that as it may, the consequences of the Government's mistaken policy became apparent in the attitude of the peasant deputies in the first Duma and necessitated the amendment of the electoral law in a restrictive sense, which was enacted during the recess after the dissolution of the short-lived second Duma and was denounced by the Opposition as a violation of the constitution.

Shortly before the meeting of the Duma the resignation of



Count Witte took place, followed by the resignations of Count Lamsdorff, Mr. Peter Durnorvo, and other members of his Cabinet. Mr. Goremykin, an old and politically colourless bureaucrat and courtier, was appointed Prime Minister, and at the head of the most important of all Ministries, that of the Interior, was placed Mr. Peter Stolypin, former Governor of Saratow, where he had greatly distinguished himself in the repression of a revolutionary outbreak by his energy and firmness and by his courage and wise moderation.

The final removal from the stage of active politics of Russia's greatest statesman was one of the direst misfortunes that could have befallen the dynasty no less than the nation. It meant the disappearance of the only force strong enough to have stayed the country on the course leading to perdition on which an insane domestic and recklessly mismanaged foreign policy was to launch the country in the end. Ever since the Japanese War, whose outbreak he had been powerless to prevent, and which had definitely opened his eyes to the inherent weakness of Russia, he had become firm as a rock in the conviction that for its steady progressive development the country needed, above all, peace, and that its maintenance should be the chief aim of our foreign policy. Not that his views in matters of foreign policy had been always very clear or sound, which is not to be wondered at considering that he had never had an occasion to go deep into the study of history and the development of international relations, but his powerful intellect and unerring business acumen would always have pointed out to him the safe way out of any critical situation and his strong and domineering will would have compelled its adoption if he had been in power at such a time. In one respect he was certainly in error, and that was in his belief in the possibility of a Franco-Russo-German *entente*, or alliance—by the way one of the favourite ideas of the Emperor William. He evidently did not understand that the only consideration that could have caused republican France to seek an alliance with autocratic Russia was the expectation of a coming war with Germany and the hope of the reconquest of her lost provinces, and that consequently any political combination including an *entente* or alliance with Germany would have been unacceptable to any French Government whatever its colour in domestic

politics. He may have thought that financial and business considerations might prove of sufficient importance to carry the day in favour of such a policy. If so, he failed to realize that with the French people this was a question, not of business or policy, but of psychology, a psychology misjudged by him as it evidently was by the Emperor William as well.

I feel bound to refer here at some length to an affair in connection with which the late Emperor Nicholas has been most unjustly made the object of much obloquy and even accusations of treachery from both sides. I mean the conclusion between the Emperors of Russia and of Germany in the summer of 1905, during the Japanese War, of a treaty signed by them at Bjorkoe on board the Emperor Nicholas's yacht, the text of which is said to have been found by the revolutionary Government in the archives of the Imperial Palace at Tsarskoe Selo, and published by them in the autumn of 1917 along with the telegraphic correspondence exchanged between the two Sovereigns before and after the event.

The published text of the treaty translated into English runs as follows :

Their Imperial Majesties, the Emperor of All the Russias on one side and the Emperor of Germany on the other, in order to assure the peace of Europe, have agreed on the following points of a treaty concerning a defensive alliance :

Article I. If any European State attacks one of the two Empires, the allied party binds itself to aid the other contracting party with all its land and sea forces.

Article II. The high contracting parties bind themselves not to conclude a separate peace with any enemy whosoever.

Article III. The present treaty enters into force at the moment of the conclusion of peace between Russia and Japan and must be denounced after a warning one year in advance.

Article IV. This treaty having entered into force, Russia will undertake the steps necessary to bring it to the knowledge of France and to propose to her to adhere to it as an ally.

(Signed) NICHOLAS.  
WILLIAM.

I cannot, of course, accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the above text, which I had to translate from the French text published in an article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, this French text being evidently a translation from the Russian text as published by the revolutionists,

the latter in its turn being apparently a translation from the French original said to have been found in the Imperial archives. I must also apologize for the unavoidably atrocious English of my literal translation of the French text.

The article I refer to here is due to the pen of Mr. Iswolsky, late Ambassador in Paris and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and was published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* on November 1, 1919.

In his comments on the treaty, Mr. Iswolsky, most loyally taking up the cudgels in defence of the memory of our late unfortunate Sovereign, demonstrates from the very text of the treaty itself the utter groundlessness of any imputations of treachery to his ally, France, based on the fact of his having signed this treaty. He points out that although Article I of the treaty stipulates that "if *any* European State *whatever* ('un Etat European *quelconque*') attacks one of the two Empires the allied party ('la partie alliée') engages to aid his co-contractant with all his land and sea forces," and although this article, if taken alone by itself, might, on account of its defective wording, seem to admit the possibility of Russia finding herself, in case of an attack by France on Germany, by the side of the latter Power, such a construction of the meaning of this article is *absolutely* excluded by the tenor of Article IV of the same treaty, by which Russia bound herself to undertake the steps necessary to acquaint France with the treaty and to propose to her to adhere to it *as an ally*. Mr. Iswolsky very pertinently adds: "It is superfluous to demonstrate that it would be absurd to propose to France to adhere to a treaty directed against herself."

This logical and closely reasoned explanation, coming from a statesman who a few months after the conclusion of this treaty became Minister of Foreign Affairs and whose authority could not be questioned for a moment, puts it beyond doubt that the Emperor Nicholas could not possibly have contemplated the conclusion of an alliance against France and that consequently there could not have been any question of "treachery" on his part.

Having made this point clear beyond cavil, Mr. Iswolsky continued: "It is evident that the animus of the treaty is directed against England. At the moment of its signature



England was still an almost openly declared enemy of Russia ; an armed Anglo-Russian conflict had just barely been avoided thanks to the friendly intervention of France ; but the hostile influence of England continued to make itself felt everywhere to the detriment of Russia ; was it not natural, even legitimate, on the part of the Emperor Nicholas to seek a guarantee against that Power in a continental coalition ? ”

There was, however, another circumstance connected with the signing of this treaty which gave the Emperor Nicholas much concern. It will be necessary to refer to it at some length because it serves as an apt illustration of the inconvenience, to say the least, of monarchs undertaking to manage their secret treaty business themselves not to insist at this point, on the unqualified condemnation which must be passed on the system of secret treaties of whatsoever kind as well as on the system of “ entangling ” alliances that has brought on the catastrophe in which our civilization may be doomed to perish in the end.

It appears that from the very beginning of the negotiations between the two Sovereigns the Emperor William had been insisting on the projected treaty being communicated to the French Government only after its having been signed, whereas the Emperor Nicholas felt some scruples about signing such a document without having it previously brought to the knowledge of his ally. It appears further that the Emperor William, presumably in the hope of bringing his cousin round to his point of view, had sought a personal interview with him, which took place, as mentioned above, in the summer of 1905, the two Sovereigns meeting on board their yachts in the roads of Bjorkoe, a port on the coast of Finland. During this visit of the Emperor William, which lasted a couple of days, the two Sovereigns naturally had frequent occasions of exchanging views, and it seems that at last Emperor Nicholas let himself be persuaded to affix his signature to the treaty, which in the absence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of both sides, was countersigned on behalf of Germany by Mr. de Tschirschky, a functionary of the Berlin Foreign Office, who happened to be in the suite of the German Emperor, and on behalf of Russia by Admiral Birileff, Minister of Marine, who was asked by the Emperor to give his signature without having read the treaty. Some



time afterwards the Emperor, evidently feeling that he had fallen into a trap, consulted on the subject his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Lamsdorff, who expressed himself as horrified at what had been done and apprehensive of its consequences, and represented to His Majesty the necessity of immediately taking steps to annul the treaty. The Emperor thereupon left him free to do everything needful to extricate him from the false position in which he found himself.

In the meantime the Treaty of Portsmouth had been concluded and Count Witte had arrived in St. Petersburg. Lamsdorff, who entertained the closest relations with him, requested his co-operation in order to clear up the situation embroiled by the Emperor's weakness.

This is the way matters were attempted to be arranged :

Three steps were taken simultaneously : a personal intimate letter from the Emperor Nicholas to the Emperor William, a letter from Count Witte, likewise addressed to the Emperor William, and lastly an unofficial explanation given by the Russian Ambassador in Berlin to the German Chancellor. The object of all this was to point out, on the one hand, the defect of the Bjorkoe Treaty, which had not been countersigned by the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and on the other hand the contradictions contained in the text of the treaty which would render necessary its revision. None of the steps taken produced a satisfactory effect.

But the moment was approaching when the exchange of the ratifications of the Portsmouth Treaty was to take place, which was also the moment when the Treaty of Bjorkoe was to enter into force. Therefore Count Lamsdorff decided to resort to steps of a more energetic character. He wrote to Mr. Nelidoff, our Ambassador in Paris, to inquire whether it would be possible to sound the French Government as to an eventual adhesion of France to the Treaty of Bjorkoe. Mr. Nelidoff replied at once, without even having consulted the French Government, that France, who had never resigned herself to the state of things created by the Treaty of Frankfurt and who had but recently concluded an *entente cordiale* with England, would never consent to adhere to a similar alliance. Then a new letter was addressed by the Emperor Nicholas to William II explaining to him once more the

impossibility of putting the Treaty of Bjorkoe in operation under existing circumstances. At the same time Count Osten-Sacken, our Ambassador in Berlin, was instructed to declare in a formal manner that the adhesion of France being unobtainable at the moment and the obligations of the Treaty of Bjorkoe not being capable of being conciliated with those of the treaty of alliance between Russia and France, the former must remain inoperative until an *entente* on the subject had been established between Russia, Germany and France. Count Osten-Sacken was to add that much time would be required in order to induce France to join Russia and Germany, and that the Russian Government would use their best endeavours to reach such a result.

None of the replies from Berlin contained a formal acknowledgment of the fact that the treaty had been annulled, as Mr. Iswolsky avers in his article from which I have borrowed all the details here related in preference to relying on my own recollections and information derived from other sources, which, however, in all points coincide with what has been given above.

The consequences of the singularly bungling and disingenuous manner in which this affair had been handled by Count Lamsdorff were: that it exposed the Emperor with the French to the suspicion of having had underhand and treacherous dealings with their hereditary enemy, and, with the Emperor William, to the accusation of breach of faith with him by repudiating the treaty concluded between them and bearing his signature, an accusation which he did not fail to proclaim, when on the day of the declaration of war, addressing the crowd from the balcony of his palace, he called the Emperor Nicholas a traitor and demonstratively waved in the face of the multitude the "scrap of paper" as material evidence of his Imperial cousin's treachery.

There was obviously but one straightforward way out of the difficulty created by the Emperor's inconsiderate act. It was this: the French Government should have been at once made acquainted with the Treaty of Bjorkoe and at the same time invited to adhere to it as an ally, as stipulated in Article IV of the treaty; and on receipt of the French refusal, which was undoubtedly to be expected, the treaty should have been immediately denounced, in conformity

with Article III, upon the ground that in the presence of the refusal of France, the object of the treaty, which was to create a tripartite alliance, could not be attained. By such a proceeding the treaty would have been automatically annulled at the end of the year and everything would have been done in a way entirely frank and above board.

A proposal to become a member of a tripartite alliance with Germany and Russia could not possibly be considered as an act of treachery on behalf of the Emperor Nicholas. Moreover, the Emperor could not reasonably feel ashamed of having consented to approach France with such a proposal on behalf of the Emperor William and of himself. He had a perfect right—nay, it was his solemn duty, in the interest of his own country no less than of all Europe—to do all in his power to help to dry up the real source of the ever-threatening danger to the peace of the world—the latent antagonism between France and Germany born of the settlement of the Franco-Prussian War by the Treaty of Frankfort, and to be perpetuated by the settlement of the World War as consummated at Versailles. Russia's treaty of alliance with France could evidently not stand in the way of any such endeavour on the part of the Emperor Nicholas. That treaty, although it has never been published as far as I know, is generally understood to have established between the two Powers an alliance of a merely defensive character ; that is to say, to have bound each contracting party to come to the other's assistance only in case of the other being attacked by Germany. Consequently, a proposal aiming at the removal of the danger of such an attack could have been considered by the French Government as partaking of the nature of an unfriendly act solely in the case of that Government having any reason to hold that Russia by the treaty of alliance had bound herself not only to come to France's assistance if attacked by Germany, but also to give her unqualified support to the French attitude of non-recognition of the Treaty of Frankfort, or, in other words, to France's ultimate aim of the reconquest of her lost provinces. Whether Russia had taken upon herself any such obligation, and whether in return she had secured any engagement on the part of France to support our designs in the Near East, I am, of course, unable to say, since, having been well known as a convinced opponent



of any policies based on the ambitions of Pan-Slavism—a kind of “ism” I have always held to be as dangerous to the true interests of Russia as Pan-Germanism has proved fatal to those of Germany—or on the dreams of the would-be conquerors of Constantinople or the Straits, or of both, I have never had the questionable honour of being initiated by the powers that were into the mysteries of their secret diplomacy.

Be that as it may, there is, however, another circumstance connected with the Treaty of Bjorkoe, whose very wording denotes plainly the amateurish hand of its author, which deserves attention. In Article II of the treaty both Sovereigns bind themselves “not to conclude a separate peace with any enemy whatever.” It must, I think, be conceded that no Sovereign, or let us say simply no Government, whether autocratic, constitutional or republican, has, nor can ever be held to have the moral right to pledge the lives and the honour of his subjects or its fellow-citizens in a way so as to render their fate dependent on the decisions of another Power, however closely allied, because in any war at any time circumstances may arise—as we have seen in the cases of Russia and Austria—which at a given moment may make a further enforced continuation of the war equivalent to self-destruction, and which therefore may place the Government of that country in a position where it will have to choose between betrayal of its ally or betrayal of its own country and nation. It was evidently the instinctive repugnance to enter into any such binding engagement which prevented the adherence to the famous London Agreement of September 1914 of the United States, at that time still reminiscent of the solemn warning against entangling alliances left to the country, whose father he has been called, by George Washington, perhaps the greatest and wisest statesman that ever lived.

But to return to my narrative after this lengthy digression. Mr. Iswolsky, who had been appointed to take Count Lamsdorff's place as Minister of Foreign Affairs, arrived in the capital, coming from Copenhagen, on the day preceding the opening of the first session of the first Duma, just in time to enable him to witness the opening ceremony held in the Winter Palace and to listen to the Emperor's Speech from the



Throne. In his extremely interesting "Reminiscences" printed in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of June 1, 1919, he gives some side-lights on the personalities of his future colleagues in the Cabinet. They are invariably entirely just and fair. His picture of the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Stolypin, soon to become Prime Minister, is, I think, a model of its kind, and I can do no better than to give here some extracts from it best fit to give a correct idea of this in many respects remarkable and most unjustly vilified man, who for the next six years was to be the leading statesman of Russia and who was the author of the agrarian reform, which, if his precious life had not been cut short by a vile assassin's bullet, he would assuredly have carried through to the end and would thereby have definitely cut the ground from under the feet of the revolutionary agitation among the peasantry.

"Stolypin," says Mr. Iswolsky, "was gifted with a clear and vigorous intellect; his power of work, his force of resistance, physical and moral, were prodigious. Experienced in the exploitation of his own important landed estates and having tried his hand as a provincial administrator, he was an entire stranger to bureaucratic routine, and he attacked every problem that presented itself with simple directness and unerring common sense. Perhaps his only failing was a certain lack of culture in the European sense of the word. Not that he lacked instruction, but his ideas on the great political and social questions he was called upon to deal with had not been passed through the philtre of modern scientific criticism. Moreover, his mentality had been formed under the influence of certain intellectual currents predominating in Russia at the time of his youth which may best be resumed under the term 'Slavophilism.'

"The Slavophile doctrine, which has had so great an influence on the domestic and foreign policy of Russia, condemned altogether European civilization as 'rotten' through atheism and individualism, and attributed to the Russian nation the providential mission of creating a superior culture. In the domain of religion the Slavophiles proclaimed that only the Orthodox Russian Church had remained faithful to the teachings of Christ; in the domain of politics they condemned the reforms of Peter the Great, borrowed from the West, and preached the necessity of a return to

the 'national' formulas of the Moscovite period. One of their theses consisted in holding the village commune or 'mir' to be a profoundly original creation of the Russian genius, and communal property to be the essential basis of the social and economic organization of Russia. Stolypin, without professing the extreme doctrines of the Slavophiles, had remained to some extent under their influence. However, in the agrarian question he did not hesitate to reject the fatal doctrine of the 'mir,' cause of so much evil in Russia, and to adopt, in spite of violent opposition, the system of individual property in small landholdings. On the other hand, he unfortunately never knew how to rise above certain particularly dangerous conceptions of the Slavophiles, and that is how he turned to a narrow and sometimes violent nationalism."

I can only express my unreserved concurrence in Mr. Iswolsky's views on the subject of the Slavophile doctrines, laid down in the above extract from his article, every word of which I fully endorse.

"But," continues Mr. Iswolsky, "the true and unquestioned superiority of Stolypin consisted in a rare ensemble of moral qualities. On first meeting him one felt drawn towards him by the simple and irresistible charm of his personality. On becoming better acquainted with him one discovered an elevation of sentiment and nobility of soul that the exercise of power, at times dictatorial, never affected in the slightest degree. His high and chivalrous conception of his duty made of him a servant of his Sovereign and of his country devoted until martyrdom; but at the same time, proud of his name and jealous of his liberty, he always observed, in regard to the Court and to the world of the high bureaucracy which considered him rather as an intruder, an attitude of dignified reserve and independence."

This eloquent characterization of Stolypin expresses better than I could have done the impression of his powerful and attractive personality which I carried away from the two or three meetings it was my good fortune to have with that illustrious statesman.



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